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Alcohol Reference
Mild Language
Violence

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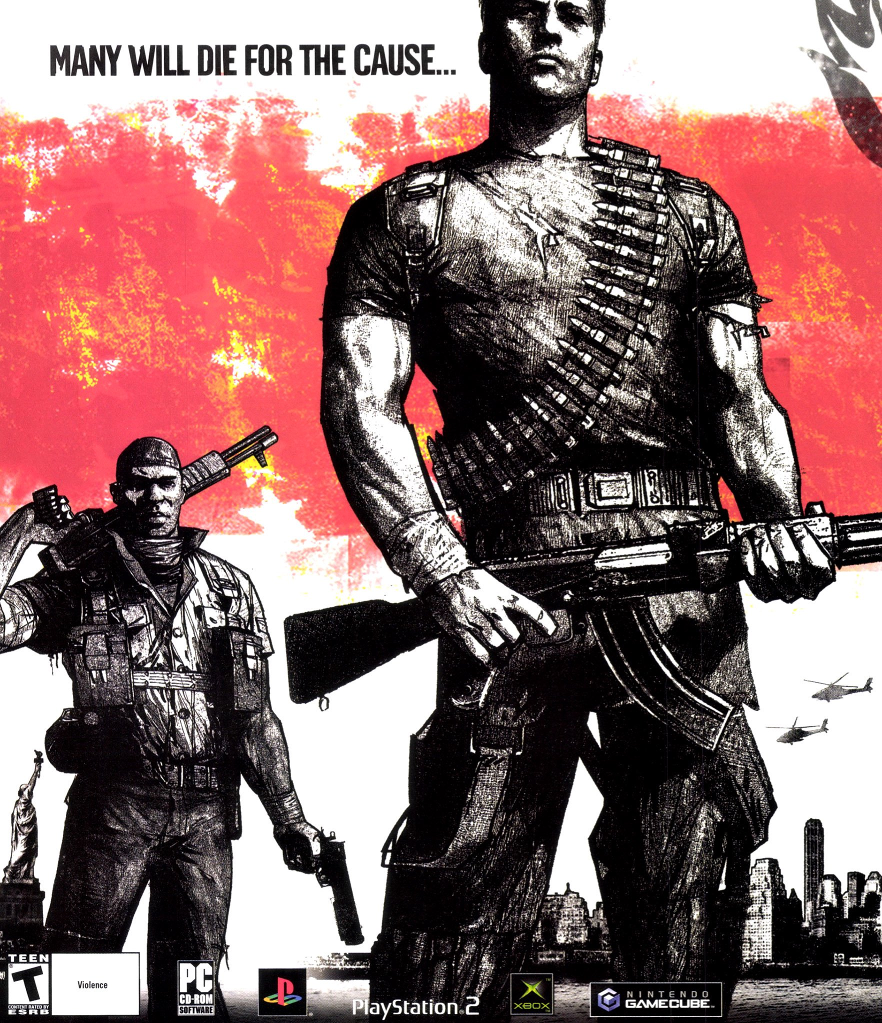
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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Violence
PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE
PlayStation 2
XBOX
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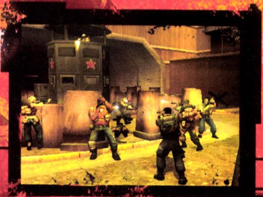

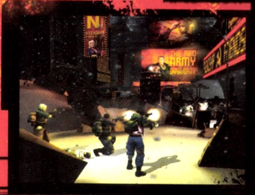

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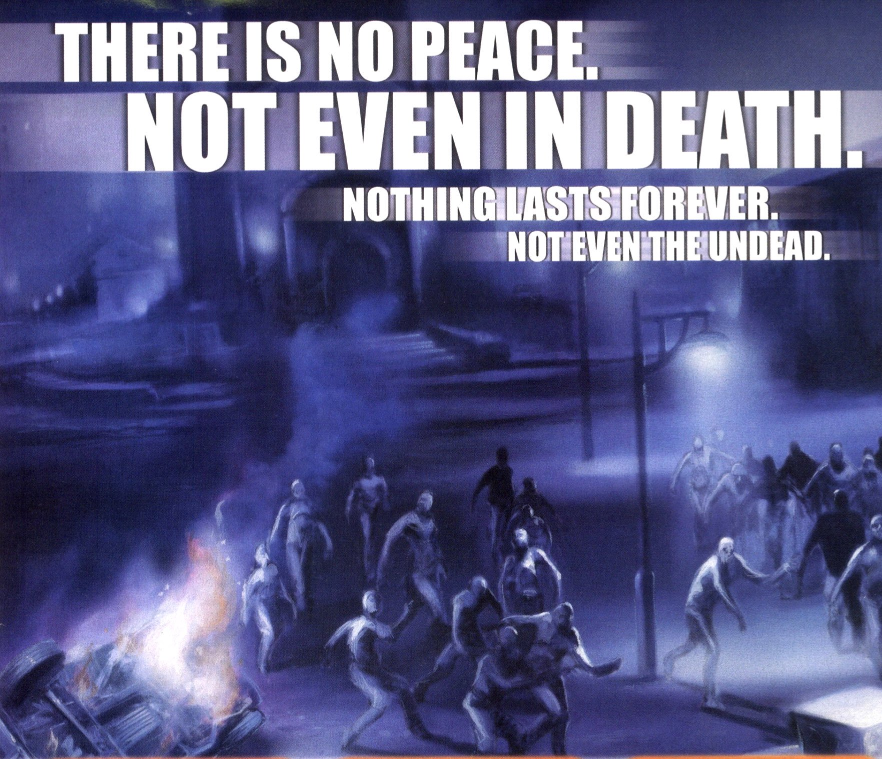
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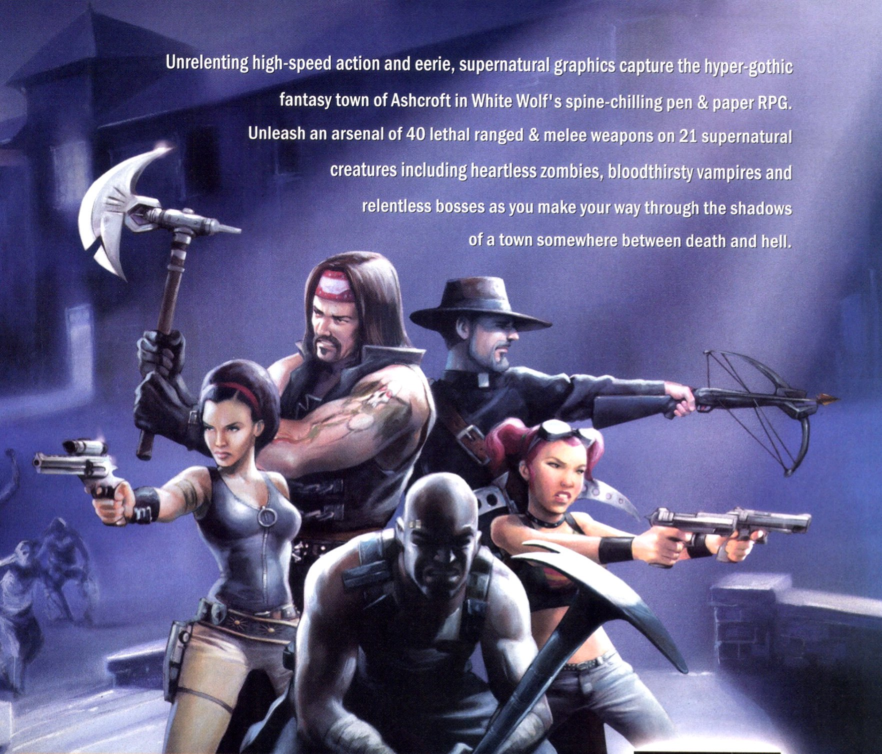

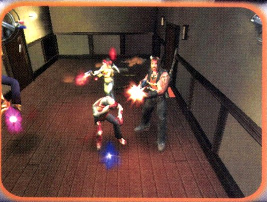

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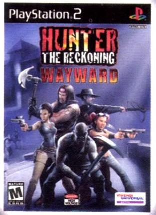

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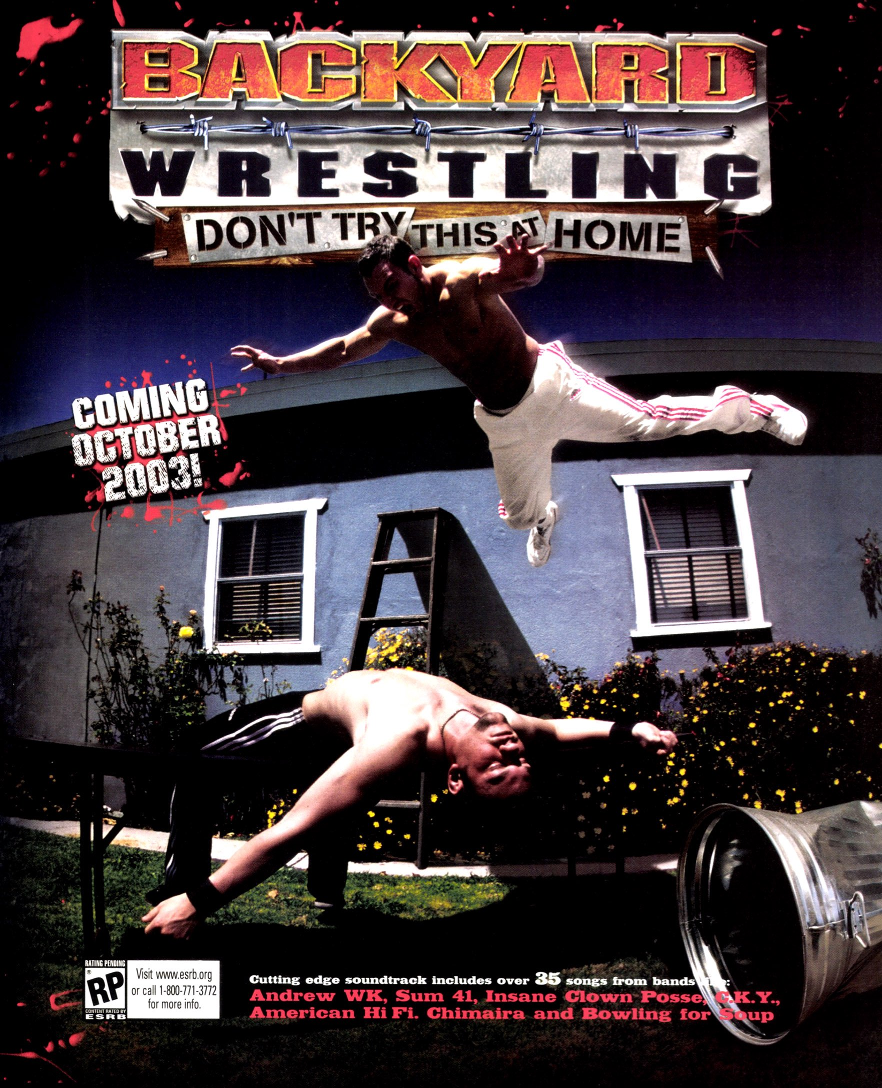
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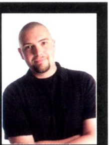

John Davison
Editor-in-Chief

Check out the story and the DVD footage!

The *Medal of Honor* games are always something to get excited about. Last year, *Frontline* had a profound effect on many of you, and we got tons of e-mail telling us how it had changed your perceptions about WWII while offering a damn fine game experience. *Rising Sun* takes all the bits that were good about *Frontline* and amplifies them dramatically. Remember the opening sequence in the last game? Remember how it scared the crap out of you with its intensity? The moment *Rising Sun* starts, you're faced with a genuinely moving experience that's way more exhilarating, and at least as powerful as some of the scenes in the movie *Pearl Harbor*. Check out our exclusive cover story this month, then boot up the Underground DVD and see the game in action with our exclusive behind-the-scenes footage from Electronic Arts' studios.

On a briefly self-congratulatory note, this issue marks *OPM*'s sixth birthday. Happy birthday to us. If you want to send us cake, feel free.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

GREG ORLANDO
Please welcome the first of Our Two Gregs. Orlando helped us out with a scathing and subtly hilarious *Futurama* review. His normal gig is senior editor at our sister mag *XBN*. But please don't hold his love of the Xbox against him.

JOHN SCALZI
John's in the midst of polishing off the spectacular *Book of the Dumb*, which details the most asinine exploits scraped from the very bottom of our collective gene pool. You won't believe the stories, but every word is true. www.scalzi.com

GREG SEWART
Sewart used to work at our *other* sister mag, *Electronic Gaming Monthly*...until they deported his ass. Now he's working freelance from Canada and cursing us all for using the words "U.S." and "America" interchangeably.

Beautiful
CANADA

PENNY ARCADE
If by now you don't know what Penny Arcade is, there is something very, very wrong with you. Perhaps you've heard of this new invention called the Internet? Look into it. Once you get up and running, head over to www.penny-arcade.com.

Videogames Have Ratings, Just Like Movies

The Entertainment Software Rating Board provides information about videogame content. ESRB ratings are intended as guidelines only; parents should still monitor minors' purchases.

WWW.ESRB.ORG

EARLY CHILDHOOD RATING
Deemed suitable for children 3 or older. Products carrying this label have absolutely no material that would be considered inappropriate by parents.

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The E replaced the previous K-A rating last year. Suitable for kids ages 6 and up, E-rated games may contain minimal violence or crude language.

TEEN RATING
Contains suggestive themes; mild or strong language; and animated violence. Some parents may want to supervise children playing T-rated games.

MATURE RATING
These games contain more adult themes, such as blood and gore; stronger language; and sexual themes. Deemed not suitable for those under 17.

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THE SIMPSONS **HIT & RUN**

Knee-slapping, but not earthshaking

Publisher: Vivendi Universal **Developer:** Radical **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

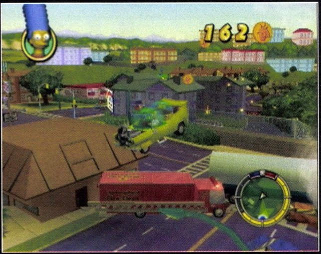
I don't watch television, as a general rule. Oh, I'll flip it on when I'm feeling bored or when I need to turn my brain off for awhile, but there's nothing I'm particularly committed to watching on a weekly basis.

There's just one exception: *The Simpsons*. Sunday nights are an event at my house, and missing a new episode feels sort of like forgetting my mom's birthday: It just ain't right.

I'm telling you this because I liked *Hit & Run* a lot—but your mileage may vary depending on your *Simpsons* fandom quotient.

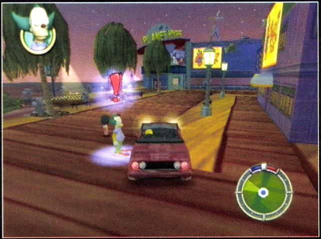
Part of this is a result of the near-limitless array of in-jokes and episode references sprinkled throughout this virtual version of Springfield. You'll plow through a field of Tomacco, pass billboards advertising the new area codes, and take a shortcut through the Stonecutters' Hidden Tunnel. You'll drive Marge's Canyonero, Professor Frink's hover car, and the monstrosity Homer designed for his brother's car company. And you'll conduct missions that require you to collect "flatmeat" for Cletus, round up monkeys for Dr. Nick's experiments, or chauffeur Comic Book Guy as he races another nerd to be the first to register his disgust about the new McBain film on the Internet. There are more goodies here than even a diehard fan could possibly digest in a single sitting.

The best part about the game, though, is that it's the first *Simpsons* title that approaches the entertainment value of the show itself. While there's a great deal of episode referencing going on, there's also loads of new dialogue (recorded, of course, by all the actual voice actors from the show). One of the funniest segments is when Bart walks you through the controls of the game—all the while making asides about what a crappy job it is to have to do the tutorial in a videogame. The result is that, in spite of the problems the game has, it's a genuinely entertaining experience, generating more laughs than, say, just about any first-season episode.



1/7
Visit the Springfield Tire Fire

1/10
1:14
Item Dropped!



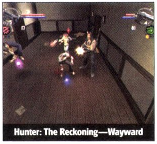
But the game does have problems. Chief among them is the fact that there are really only a handful of mission types: race, follow, chase-and-destroy, and collect. That's pretty much it. The specifics change from mission to mission, but the general framework is depressingly monotonous. This is compounded by the fact that, while there are 49 main missions spanning seven levels, the game takes place in only three locations, with mainly cosmetic differences between them.

The good news is that there are scads of collectible items scattered throughout each level, giving those of you with an obsessive collective disorder something to keep you busy until the next season starts.

Joe Rybicki

★★★★

DID YOU KNOW?
For the subway scenes in 2003's *The Italian Job*, special electric Minis had to be built, since gasoline-powered vehicles are not allowed in the Los Angeles subway system.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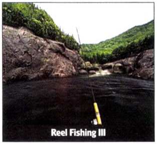
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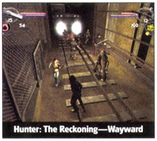
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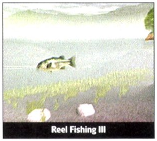

Reel Fishing III

HUNTER: THE RECKONING–WAYWARD

Publisher: Interplay
Developer: High Voltage
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

If you blinked last year, you probably missed Interplay's release of the original *Hunter: The Reckoning* on Xbox and GameCube. I'll admit I'm right there with you. I wish I could say that playing the PS2 sequel, *Wayward*, makes we wanna grab another system to see what the first game is all about. It doesn't.

It's a weird thing, too, because the concept is right up my alley—I mean, a hack-n-slash-based action-RPG set in a world of zombies, vampires, and werewolves! What's not to like? It even provides some great atmosphere, with the dark mood set perfectly by sharp graphics and realistic sound effects (a couple times, I actually thought I heard it raining outside—it was just the surround sound).

But the gameplay? Ugh. Not only do you have to fulfill stupid mission objectives (destroy headstones in a graveyard—the same one on this month's demo disc—to find *data CDs*?!), you find yourself returning to the same area multiple times to fulfill other stupid mission objectives. Even worse, fixed camera angles prohibit exploration of the wide-open environments, leading to five-minute levels that frustratingly take 30 because you can't find that one newspaper kiosk to destroy to find the item you need. And good luck beating some of the levels by yourself; some are downright next to impossible outside of Co-op mode.

I think Kansas summarized it best: "Don't carry on with *Wayward*, son." Well...something like that.

Chris Baker

★★½

REEL FISHING III

Publisher: Natsume
Developer: Marvelous
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Most fishing games these days tend to lean heavily toward the arcade variety that brought *Sega Bass Fishing* for Dreamcast such success. But the *Reel Fishing* series has always been in a class by itself, and this, the first next-generation version, is no different.

It's not just that *Reel Fishing III* is more of a simulation than other fishing games, although it most certainly is—until you get the hang of moving your lure properly and setting your hook well, you can literally spend an entire session without catching a single fish.

But the game is more than a fish-catching simulation—it's a simulation of the whole fishing experience. Sounds odd, I know, but *Reel Fishing* is as much about the atmosphere of fishing as it is about bait and reel and line strength. The game puts you into these spectacularly photorealistic environments, gets rid of all the screen clutter, and surrounds you with the sounds of nature (and I mean that literally—this is a fishing game with *surround sound*). Once you catch your fish, you can take it back to the lodge, keep it fed and happy, and watch it grow. No kidding. With this presentation, you'd be forgiven for thinking the actual act of fishing is almost secondary.

It isn't. You need to know your stuff (or learn it from the game's tutorials) to catch anything here. That can prove frustrating—as can the artificial requirements for advancing to new locations—but it's such a pleasant experience otherwise that I can't really complain.

Joe Rybicki

★★★★

THE ITALIAN JOB

Crap movie, crap game

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Climax
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen

It's the game no one asked for based on the movie no one liked that starred Mark Wahlberg and Ed Norton. *The Italian Job*'s reason to be is simply to try and squeeze some dollars out of a summer movie that was nowhere near as successful as some people apparently hoped it would be. It's as though Climax had just crapped out a mediocre driving game and Eidos somehow managed to pick up the rights to the flick from Paramount (which produces the *Tomb Raider* movies) for a couple of beers and a bag of peanuts. It's like a feeble attempt at a mission-based driving game (think *Midnight Club* or *Driver* or something, I guess—it's hard to tell since it's so half-hearted) with Mini Coopers thrown in for really obvious movie "flava."

The way the flick has been shoehorned in is laughable at best. The story is essentially a badly scripted and appallingly acted-out series of mind-numbing justifications for making you drive around Los Angeles. "Drive the Minis here" it says. Oh, no, "now drive them here." OK then. "Now drive three more of them back over here again." Why? What was wrong with where they were earlier?

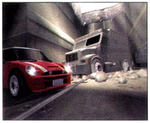
In a pathetic attempt to spice things up a bit, the game also features a rating system based on the stunts you perform. Seeing as these stunts seem to involve nothing more elaborate than simply falling off the curb in a controlled manner, you often find yourself being awarded a bonus for something you had no idea you'd done in the first place. Coupled with this system is the game's annoying tendency to make you get stuck on certain parts of the environment. Seeing as every mission in the game is against the clock, being suddenly attached to a tree or a lamppost is far from conducive to good gameplay.

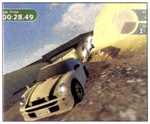
At the end of each chunk of story you're given a rating based on your performance. It rattles off a long list of different criteria this rating is based on, but ultimately it all seems inconsequential. Getting a passing grade for a level is really just prolonging the agony. You can, of course, not bother with the story, but what's the point of that? There's a Stunt mode, which would be good if not for the aforementioned environment-sticking problem, and there's a Free Roaming mode that is nowhere near fun enough to justify even existing in the first place.

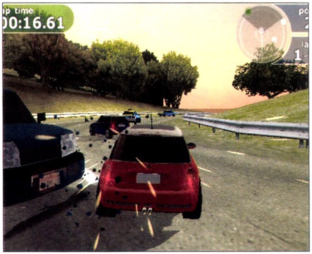
This is *not* a good game.

John Davison

★★







57.5% The average score of all 37 games with an ESPN license reviewed to date (across all platforms), according to gamerankings.com.

ESPN NFL FOOTBALL

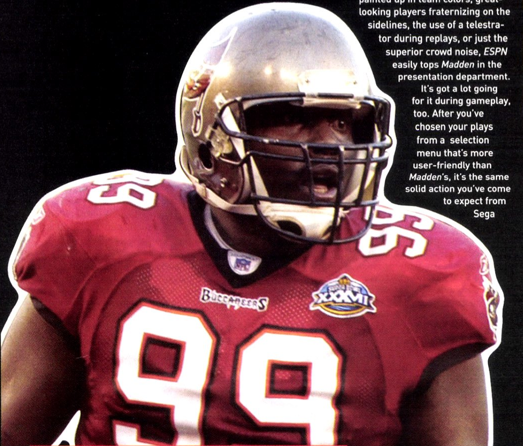
Great...but missing the "oomph"

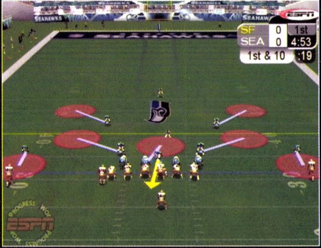
Publisher: Sega **Developer:** Visual Concepts **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

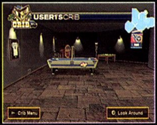
Last year, Sega had the ESPN license for *NFL 2K3*, but it didn't do much with it. Beyond a logo and a Bottom Line to update you on the latest scores, there just wasn't very much associating the game with the Total Sports Network. Well, you need only look at the name of the game formerly known as *NFL 2K4* to realize this just isn't the case anymore. And unlike almost every other sports game bearing the network's name in the title, *ESPN NFL Football* won't disappoint you.

As soon as you make it to the Main Menu screen, the ESPN-ness of it all hits you as the camera pans about a 3D rendering of the *NFL Countdown* studio. Choose your teams, and Chris Berman fills you in on the strengths of each club, picks a key player, and even plays Swami with a prediction. From there, it's no-name announcers as usual, but they're competent enough not to seem out of place. Boomer chimes in again at halftime to fill you in on the highlights—something he doesn't do at the end of a game.

Aside from the ESPN association, you can't beat the general presentation that Visual Concepts visually conceptualizes for us. Whether it's fans in the stands all painted up in team colors, great-looking players fraternizing on the sidelines, the use of a telestrator during replays, or just the superior crowd noise, *ESPN* easily tops *Madden* in the presentation department.







It's got a lot going for it during gameplay, too. After you've chosen your plays from a selection menu that's more user-friendly than *Madden*'s, it's the same solid action you've come to expect from Sega football games. The play animations are beautiful and accurate (Ricky Williams helps push his blockers forward when he has nowhere to go, for example), and the player A.I. feels spot on. I also like charging up for a more powerful juke or spin move by holding down X (even if I'd rather use the button for a constant speed boost, as in *Madden*). However, my running-game experience seems a bit inconsistent—it's usually either a loss of two or a gain of at least six. And not trusting your running game can make winning something of a chore.

If you don't win, your owner won't be too happy in Franchise mode—expect to hear about it in your e-mail inbox, along with injury reports, trade offers, etc. In managing this sort of stuff, don't be surprised if you spend as much time not playing football as you do out on the field.

Furthering this cause is The Crib, your virtual home. And you can proceed to decorate it with all sorts of NFL memorabilia earned by accomplishing tasks during gameplay. You can even earn the right to play minigames like air hockey. Win or lose, you want to keep playing games just to see what cool things you'll be able to unlock next.

Yet, with all it has going for it, *ESPN* still feels like it's missing something. It drives me crazy trying to figure out what that "something" is, and this is all I can come up with: It lacks that certain "oomph" I get out of EA football.

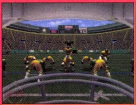
Still, I can see why a lot of gamers might prefer *ESPN*. If you've always been one of these people, you still will be. And if you haven't yet experienced Sega's brand of football, it's definitely worth a taste test. Who knows, you might just end up with a new favorite football game.

Chris Baker

★★★★½

FIRST-PERSON FLOP

This year, when playing by yourself or online, you can opt to play inside the helmet of your favorite players. It's a cool idea...but so was the helmet cam they used in NFL Europe back when it was the World League. The view was shaky and disorienting there, and it's shaky and disorienting here. In the end, it's just a worthless gimmick.



HUT 1! HUT 2! AW, CRAP
The PS1 version of *Madden NFL 96* was canned due to technical difficulties, giving the *GameDay* franchise a head start in the 32-bit gridiron wars.

MADDEN NFL 2004

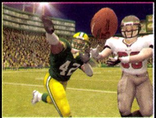
Boring us again with its greatness

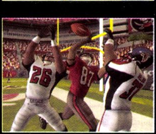
Publisher: EA Sports **Developer:** Tiburon **MSRP:** $4999 **ESRB:** Everyone

If you're like me, you're getting kind of bored with *Madden*. Oh, not in a bad way, mind you. You're just tired of the fact that the franchise manages to top itself every year. Can't Tiburon do something to screw it up? Some ill-advised new direction to lead it, so you as a reader have something unexpected to take in during this review, and I as a critic can enjoy lambasting it? Nope. Instead, you're stuck there reading a bunch of boring ol' relentless praise. Just like always. So here goes.

If you've played *Madden* on PS2 at all, you know about its fantastic core gameplay. Passing feels right, the running game functions as well as you can hope for, and the A.I. generally responds properly. Yep, so the game of football you get with *Madden NFL 2004* is just as great as ever. What's new?

Actually, there is something new that—as you may have guessed (*yawn*)—only improves the action. In the greatest innovation for the right analog stick since *Ape Escape*, you can use the usually useless Dual Shock appendage for Playmaker control, which essentially calls audibles prior to the snap and even during gameplay. Before the QB gets the ball, Playmaker acts as a sort of alternate hot-route system on offense. This also alters the running game; at this time, defending safeties can adjust their intentions as well. Once the pigskin is hiked, use the right analog to alter your closest receiver's route; on defense, react immediately to the play by sending your backs to either pursue the run or anticipate a pass. Just as you'd *freakin' expect*, it works brilliantly. Big surprise.





And Tiburon couldn't settle for improving only *Madden*'s core gameplay. Nope. It had to go and add considerable depth to the Franchise mode by making you a team owner. Now, for as many as 30 seasons, you partake in a veritable football RPG, doing everything from hiring and firing coaches and building a new stadium (and I do mean *building*—you create it from the ground up in one of 17 billion different ways) to moving your team and establishing the price of a hot dog.

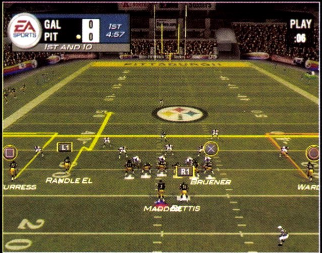
John Madden likes hot dogs. He also likes to provide color commentary to Al Michael's *once again* fantastic play-by-play. It's all part of the stellar, polished presentation you've come to expect in *Madden*. And they've even gone and improved *this* aspect with more interesting replays, some of which you see on the Play Selection screen (in between the offensive and defensive formation lines). I must say, however, that some of the between-plays player animations they've used for years could use a face-lift. (Hey, whadd'ya know?! A seminegative remark!)

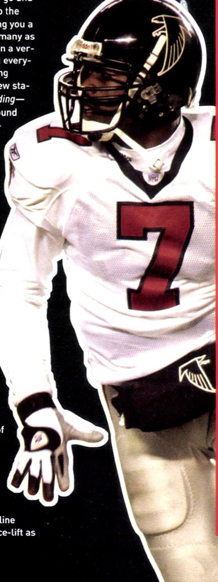
Last year, *Madden*'s online system badly needed a face-lift as well—it was probably the easiest thing to complain about. Well, it got one. Now, you and your pals can participate in online tournaments and chat live via headset. There's even a cheater filter to keep the morons out there honest, and you can get credit for a win even if your opponent pulls the plug.

Madden 2004 won't let you down in any way. Yep, Tiburon's gotta go and give us a new greatest NFL game ever made. Again. And they'll probably do it again next year.

Chris Baker

★★★★★





EA OWNS YOU

NCAA Football 2004 started it—now *Madden 2004* continues the EA Bio function. A cool little spot on your memory card you'll see used by every EA Sports game for the foreseeable future, it not only logs your most commendable achievements in each game and assigns you experience level, but also keeps tabs of total gameplay time. (Yes, I've spent nearly two *days* of my life this year already playing EA football. Yikes.)

SIDE BY SIDE

RUSHING
ESPN: Inconsistent—usually either a short loss or a big gain.
Madden: Spot on. You'll probably average about four yards per carry, just as you should.
Edge: Madden

PASSING
ESPN: At its core, it's just as great as Madden's. It's just missing one thing...
Madden: Playmaker control sets EA's game apart. You can tell receivers where to go on the fly!
Edge: Madden

PRESENTATION
ESPN: Needs actual ESPN announcers in the booth for the full ESPN effect. Other than this, the atmosphere is fantastic.
Madden: Everything comes slick and very polished, with a variety of EA Trax to liven up the experience.
Edge: ESPN

GRAPHICS
ESPN: The player models look scarily accurate, and their gameplay animations are top notch.
Madden: ESPN looks better everywhere except during a play, which is where it really counts.
Edge: Even

CHEERLEADERS
ESPN: Two sets of twin sisters and their hot friend. Breasts jiggle in unison as they move.
Madden: Two sets of triplets and their hot twin friends. No breast jiggling, however.
Edge: ESPN

ONLINE PLAY
ESPN: Voice chat, USB keyboard support, tournaments, cheat filter, leagues organized through espnvideogames.com.
Madden: Voice chat, USB keyboard support, tournaments, cheat filter, EA Messenger, no leagues.
Edge: ESPN

OVERALL
ESPN: Overall, a great game that some might even prefer to *Madden*. It just lacks that certain "oomph."
Madden: Once again, it's the best NFL football game ever made. Did you expect anything less?
Edge: Madden

Warp
44 dm
Laharl
Bonus Gauge 0

I can only do this once, because I need to use this item I got from the Seraph!

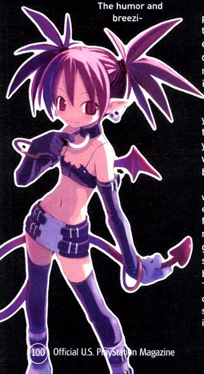
DISGAEA: HOUR OF DARKNESS

More than just gratuitious quirkiness

Publisher: Atlus
Developer: Nippon Ichi
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

Some bad games are merely bad, but others have a good game struggling to break out: *Rhapsody* on PS1 is an example of the latter. Its winning cast of characters and lighthearted story is dragged down by the absence of challenge or gameplay. Developer Nippon Ichi has improved with every attempt since then, and Atlus has given it a second chance by releasing *Disgaea: The Hour of Darkness*. It's Nippon Ichi's best game to date, and it fulfills the developer's early promise.

The humor and breeziness in the story line is something that the developer already has down pat, so naturally, it's back in *Disgaea*. The star of the game is Laharl, who overslept for so long that rival demons started vying for his late father's throne in the Netherworld. With the help of his Etna, his vassal, and Flonne, an inquisitive angel-in-training, he begins the task of showing all claimants who's really the boss of the underworld. If you liked *Okage: Shadow King*, there's a similar vibe here, stemming from wacky elements like an assassin too polite to carry out her duty and a bunch of hapless penguin flunkies prone to exploding.



The extradimensional setting powers both of *Disgaea*'s innovations on familiar strategy-RPG elements. A dark assembly of demonic senators presides over many aspects of the game, including character creation, battlefield conditions, and the quality of the shops in your home castle. To get senators to see things your way, you'll have to either bribe them with goods or bring them in line by force.

Equally important is the item world, which allows you to treat every item in your possession—from a pack of used gum to the most powerful sword in the game—as its own pocket dimension with dozens and dozens of battlefields. By defeating "floors" of each item, you can open up options to manipulate some of its statistics. The result is an extremely robust and flexible item-creation system, and one that offers hours upon hours of gameplay beyond the main story.

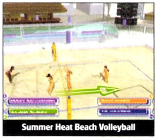
Not that the main game is lacking—one of the most welcome improvements upon *Rhapsody* is the presence of some real difficulty. Battlefield layouts, like running a gauntlet of 17 warriors, require real thought and planning to maneuver past, and you'll probably find yourself just barely eking out a victory against some of the tougher challenges.

Disgaea isn't all good, of course. In terms of graphical prowess, the developer is like a kid who refuses to dip a toe in the deep end of the pool after learning how to swim. The sprites are well animated, and the large character portraits get a generous range of expressions, but the 3D environments are serviceable at best. The well-localized text is also marred by poorly voiced English dialogue. Fortunately, *Disgaea* is another in the trend of bilingual games, so you can listen to the Japanese vocal track on top of the well-done Danny Elfman–inspired score.

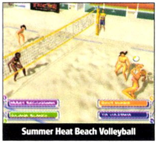
The fact that a small developer can produce something this polished is impressive, and the fact that Atlus saw fit to publish it here is heartwarming. Even if there were a wealth of strategy RPGs on PS2, genre fans could do much worse than *Disgaea*.

Nich Maragos

★★★★



Summer Heat Beach Volleyball



Summer Heat Beach Volleyball

SUMMER HEAT BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim Studios Cheltenham
MSRP: $29.99 **ESRB:** Teen

My first half-hour with *Summer Heat Beach Volleyball* (contrary to what Kylie Minogue subliminally tried to tell me via song *every single time I started a match*) was anything but "love at first sight." No camera angles worked well for me, and all the different-colored arrows on the court only led to confusion. And did I really need controls as complex as these for an arcade volleyball game?

Soon enough, though, something just clicked. I started to get it. The camera worked well, the arrows suddenly made sense, the controls felt natural, and I legitimately started to enjoy myself.

My A.I. counterpart and I surprisingly made quite the team, as she was every bit as capable a player as me and usually moved to the ball like she would if she were a human being. If a mistake was made, it was usually by me. I also liked hearing the players communicate in voices consistent with their nationality—subtle but nice.

Wanna know the most surprising thing about *Heat*? It isn't gratuitous—and we're talking the publisher of *BMX XXX* here. Sure, it features plenty of bikini-clad v-ballers, but that comes with the culture of the sport (besides, you've got just as many buff dudes to choose from). There are no suggestive hugs like in GameCube's *Beach Spikers*...and no scenes of players feeding strawberries to each other, as in Xbox's *DOA: Xtreme Beach Volleyball*. It actually focuses on solid gameplay. What a concept.

Chris Baker

★★★½

PS1 Quick Hits

MOTOCROSS MANIA 2

Publisher: Gotham
Developer: Alpine
MSRP: $9.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

This is a surprisingly full-featured racer—it's got a simple bike setup and even a track editor! Too bad it looks like it was surgically extracted from the bowels of something that crawled up the ass of something else and died there. **–J.R.**

★★½

SLOTS

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Coresoft
MSRP: $9.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Page 8 of the *Slots* manual states, "All prizes are fictitious." That about sums up all I have to say. Sure, I like slots as much as the next guy, and this game has nearly 50 different types—but all prizes are fictitious. So why bother? **–J.R.**

★★

BLASTER

Manufacturer: MadCatz
MSRP: $34.99

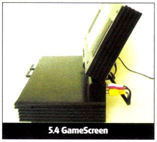
You still can't buy a Guncon2 without picking up one packed in with Namco gun games (*Time Crisis II* is the only one worth buying). The Blaster acts as a solid substitute, though, with fine accuracy and a good feel, especially when using the rounded D-pad. **–C.B.**

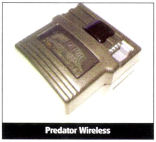
★★★★

SORDID PAST
Though best known for racers, one of Rainbow Studios' first games was a shooter called *The Hive*, which came out in the first year of the PS1.

5.4 GameScreen

Predator Wireless


5.4 GameScreen


Predator Wireless

5.4 GAMESCREEN

Manufacturer: MadCatz
MSRP: $149.99

You know how the PS1 LCD screen makes all those old games look better? How games that looked horribly pixellated on your television look smooth all of a sudden? It's like the PS1 games magically made the leap to PS2.

The 5.4 GameScreen does something a little bit like that, only in reverse: It makes PS2 games look like PS1 games.

I don't know that I've ever seen an LCD screen that looks worse than this beast. It starts off by giving your games a washed-out, almost old-timey look. Then it ups the ante with random pixel jitter over the entire screen. Next, it lovingly embraces the image your game is generating in such a way that it seems reluctant to let it go...resulting in a full-screen ghosting effect that would be cool if it didn't look like crap. If I dropped full price on this thing, I'd probably never be able to buy anything again because I'd be so paralyzed by buyer's remorse.

It's not all bad, though: The sound isn't the worst I've ever heard, and installing the unit on top of your PS2 is a simple matter that literally takes just a few seconds. It even looks nice sitting there (provided it's not actually *on*, of course).

Even so, I have to wonder why you'd want one of these units in the first place. Since it runs off an A/C adapter, it's not like it's significantly more portable than a television. And for the same price, you could get a television that is much bigger, much nicer, and much kinder to your games.

Joe Rybicki

★

PREDATOR WIRELESS

Manufacturer: Pelican
MSRP: $39.95

This is one of the more comfortable third-party controllers I've come across, even though it has drastically indented R2 and L2 buttons—a configuration that usually bugs the hell out of me. It also has that satiny finish that is becoming popular these days.

On top of the comfort factor, it's wireless. (I'm assuming it's 900MHz, in spite of—or perhaps because of—the fact that it doesn't divulge its transmission frequency anywhere in the packaging or press material.) For a $40 product, the response is pretty quick and the range is pretty solid; you won't be playing from down the block, but really, why would you want to?

The base unit also includes an infrared receiver, so you don't have to fill another slot on your PS2 with a DVD remote receiver. To which I say, OK, whatever. Knock yourselves out. It's a nice thought, but not exactly a selling point.

I'd be a lot more enthusiastic about this controller, though, if it weren't for the fact that the D-pad seems seriously screwy. It doesn't seem to want to settle on one direction; tap Right and Left and more often than not, it'll move up or down as well. That's going to make things pretty damn frustrating in games that require any kind of D-pad precision.

It's not a deal breaker, though, since the comfort factor is high enough that you could conceivably overlook the D-pad issue. Besides, most games rarely use the D-pad for anything important these days.

You could do a lot worse for the price, that's for sure.

Joe Rybicki

★★★

SPLASHDOWN: RIDES GONE WILD

Much, much better than you'd think

5-STAR AWARD
OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

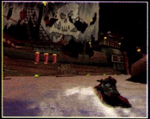
Publisher: THQ
Developer: Rainbow
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

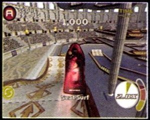
I'll admit it. I wasn't terribly excited about *Rides Gone Wild* (aka *Splashdown 2*). The developer took my favorite feature of the original game—the stunning, almost photo-realistic environments—and threw it out the window. This sort of thing happens to me all the time (see: *Bombastic*). I'm starting to get used to it.

Anyway, I was a fool for doubting Rainbow, because not only has the developer delivered a solid racer and a satisfying sequel, it's gone well above and beyond the call of extreme-sports-racing duty.

How, you ask? Two words: Downtown Downpour. I'd been pleasantly surprised with all the levels up to the point when I encountered this one (five or six tracks into the Career mode on Pro difficulty). I immediately quit out of Career and jumped into this level in the free-roaming Practice mode. This is quite possibly the coolest level I have ever seen in any kind of racing game. It's like the designers looked at the *SSX*s and *Jet X2O*s of the world, snickered, and said, "OK, boys, step aside and let us show you how it's done."

You won't find any screens of Downtown Downpour on this page because I don't want to spoil it for you. But let me give you a little teaser: Imagine being stuck in a small river-town in the midst of a very, very bad flood, with nothing but a Sea Doo to keep you occupied. It rocks.





I'm also very pleasantly surprised by a concept I originally thought would be pretty hokey: the "storytelling" aspect of the levels. Turns out, this is often more entertaining than not, and isn't half as distracting as I expected. Each level evolves as you go through it; usually, the second lap gives you a little taste of what's to come, and then on the third lap, they really try to wow you. On the whole, it works.

Graphically, the game is gorgeous. There's an undeniable shift into an over-the-top cartoony style that's quite a departure from the original game. What's surprising is how good it turned out. I was expecting something along the order of all the other extreme-racing games, but there's some real style here. Some of the best-looking levels even have a look that approaches cel-shading.

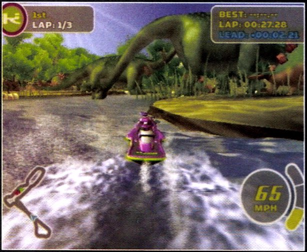
There's also a *ton* more to this game than the original. More tracks, more modes, more riders, more everything. Plus, Rainbow brought back the system it used in *ATV Offroad Fury 2*, which allows you to open up everything by "buying" new items with points. You can still open things up by beating Career mode and meeting other goals, but you don't have to do it that way if you don't want to.

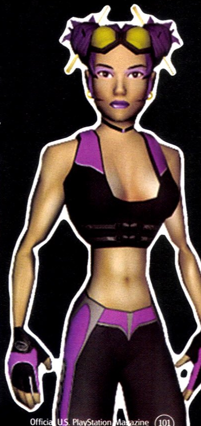
So, lots and lots of stuff to like about *Rides Gone Wild*. My only complaint is that there aren't more levels like Downtown Downpour, more levels that blow the doors off your expectations. There's a lot of innovation, but there's also a lot of run-of-the-mill cartoon-racer clichés: the ice level, the pirate ship, the haunted castle, and so on.

A few clichés aren't reason enough to miss this game, though—not by a long shot.

Joe Rybicki

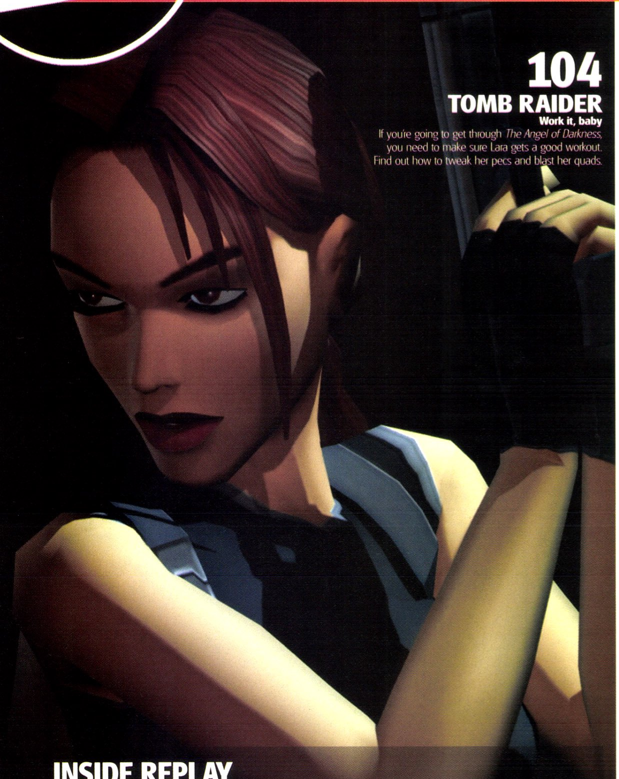
★★★★★





REPLAY

Making life easier since 2002.



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TOMB RAIDER

Work it, baby

If you're going to get through *The Angel of Darkness*, you need to make sure Lara gets a good workout. Find out how to tweak her pecs and blast her quads.

INSIDE REPLAY

108 Soul Calibur 2

Five cool things that will help you win every fight. Plus, some cool moves and tips for the two fighters featured on our demo disc this month. Load it up and fight!

PS2 Games

103 .hack//MUTATION
106 NCAA Football 2004
110 Silent Hill 3
112 Essential War Games
116 Midnight Club II
118 Silent Line: Armored Core

114 Return to Castle Wolfenstein

Find the secret stuff in the first mission of Activision's cool first-person shooter—and take out some Nazi scumbags with your Luger along the way.

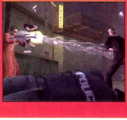
PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in green indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a five-star score. A number ❶ indicates its rank in the top-selling games for each system.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⑭ **.hack//INFECTION**	**Bandai**	★★★½	**65**
EXTRA DUNGEONS Pay attention to the OVA packed in with the game for some hints about special dungeons; the anime mentions three possibilities. Try this one: Dog-Dancing, Passionate, Tri Pansy. Be sure to pick up the Ceramic Helm!			
⑫ **.hack//MUTATION**	**Bandai**	★★★★	**69**
Grunty grunty grunty grunty grunty grunty grunty grunty grunty. We just like saying the word.			
RAISE A BONY GRUNTY Feed your baby Grunty four Cordyceps, one Mandragora, two Piney Apples, one Snaky Cactus, and then a bushel of Golden Eggs until it rattles its way to adulthood.			
RAISE A SNAKEY GRUNTY Feed your baby Grunty four Piney Apples, three Snakey Cacti, 12 Golden Eggs, and nine Oh No Melons.			
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	★★★★	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	★★★★	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	★★★★	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	**Namco**	★★★★½	**51**
Activision Anthology	Activision	★★★★	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	★★★	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	★★★½	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	★★★★½	59
Airblade	Namco	★★★★	53
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	★★★½	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	★★★½	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	★★★	67
Amplitude	Sony CEA	★★★★	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	★½	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubi Soft	★★★★½	70
Aqua Aqua	3DO	★★	42
⑧ **Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits**	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**70**
Want to go the extra mile? Here's where to find all the Spirit Dictionaries and Ancient Tablets.			
SPIRIT DICTIONARY QUEST Talk to the man on the second floor of the tavern in Yewbelle to start the Spirit Dictionary quest. He'll give you the first one when you return his pot. The rest are found in the Assembly Hall in Cathena, inside the Main Plant in Sulfas, inside the Mountain Stronghold, and in the Fortune Hall in Milmarna.			
ANCIENT TABLET QUEST After Greedo dies, open his chest to start the Ancient Tablet quest. You'll get the first one after getting the Phoenix Blood back, and the rest can be found in Drakyrnia, outside the cave in Dragon Bone Valley, inside the Coleopt Shrine, in an alley in Rueloon, in the Pyramid, and in the Chaos Forest.			
Arctic Thunder	Midway	★	50
Armored Core 2	Agetec	★★★	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	★★★½	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	★★★½	61
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	★★★½	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	★★	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	★★★★	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	★★½	45
ATV Offroad Fury	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**42**
ATV Offroad Fury 2	Sony CEA	★★★★	64
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	★★★★	66
Auto Modellista	Capcom	★★½	69
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Interplay	★★★★½	52
Barbarian	Titus	★★	57
Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament	THQ	★½	51
Batman: Vengeance	Ubi Soft	★★★	51
Battle Engine Aquila	Atari	★★★½	65
Big Mutha Truckers	Empire	★★★	71

110
ICKY
***Silent Hill 3* is pretty gross**
Beat those yucky bosses

116
VROOM!
***Midnight Club II* tips**
Maps and other goodies



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YOUR VIEWS
Tell us what you think
Your reviews of the latest games

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Black & Bruised	Majesco	★★★★	67
Blade II	Activision	★★	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	★★★½	57
BloodRayne	Majesco	★★★½	63
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	★★★½	47
BMX XXX	Acclaim	★½	65
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	★★★★	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	★★★★	58
The Bouncer	Square EA	★★★	42
Burnout	Acclaim	★★★★½	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	★★★★	63
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision	★★½	67
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	★★★★½	51
CART Fury	Midway	★	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	★★½	50
Chaos Legion	Capcom	★★★½	70
Chessmaster	Ubi Soft	★★★½	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	★★★	69
City Crisis	Take 2	★★★	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	★★★	68
Colin McRae Rally 3	**Codemasters**	**★★★★★**	**68**
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	★★	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	Gotham Games	★½	63
Conflict Zone	Ubi Soft	★★½	63
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	★★★★½	64
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	★★★★	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	**Universal**	**★★★½**	**51**
Crazy Taxi	**Acclaim**	**★★★★**	**46**
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	★½	49
Dark Cloud	**Sony CEA**	**★★★★½**	**46**
Dark Cloud 2	**Sony CEA**	**★★★★★**	**66**
Dark Summit	THQ	★★★½	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	**Acclaim**	**★★★½**	**50**
DDRMAX	Konami	★★★★	63
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	★★★★½	39
Dead to Rights	Namco	★★★	65
Def Jam: Vendetta	EA Sports Big	★★★★	67
Defender	Midway	★★★½	62
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	★★★★½	56
Devil May Cry	**Capcom**	**★★★★★**	**50**
Devil May Cry 2	Capcom	★★★	66
Dino Stalker	Capcom	★★★½	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	★★★½	65
Disney Golf	EA Games	★★★★	61
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubi Soft	★★½	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	★★★½	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubi Soft	★★★½	42
Downforce	Titus	★★	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	★★★★	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	★★½	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari	★★★½	65
Dragon Rage	3DO	★½	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	★★★★	53
Driven	Bam	★	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	★★½	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	★★½	64
Dropship	Bam	★★★★	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	★★★	61
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	★★★★½	61
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	★★★★	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	★★★★	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	★★★½	65
❿ **Dynasty Warriors 4**	**Koei**	★★★★½	**68**
Everybody have fun tonight. Everybody Wang Chung tonight.			
UNLOCK ALL GENERALS	R1, R2, L1, L2, □, □, △, △		
UNLOCK ALL SHU GENERALS	R1, R1, L1, L1, □, △, □, △		
UNLOCK ALL WEI GENERALS	R1, R1, L1, L2, □, □, □, △		
UNLOCK ALL WU GENERALS	R2, R1, L2, L1, △, △, △, □		
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	★★½	56
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	★★½	61
Endgame	Empire	★★	59
❷ **Enter the Matrix**	**Atari**	★★★	**7**
Whoa. Here's how you can do some deep editing of the Matrix: Open the Hacking program, type "Cheat," and hit Return. Then enter these codes for the following goodies:			
Maximum firepower	0034AFFF		
Infinite ammo	1DDF2556		
Infinite focus	69E5D9E4		
Infinite health	7F4DF451		
Test level	13D2C77F		
Enemies ignore you	FFFFFFF1		
Low gravity	BB013FFF		
Extra speed	FF00001A		
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	★½	49
Escape From Monkey Island	**LucasArts**	**★★★★★**	**46**
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	★★★	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	★★★★	54
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	★★	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	★½	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	★★	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	★★★	56
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	★★★	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	★★★	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	★★★★	49
Eternal Ring	Agetec	★★	38
Eve of Extinction	Eidos	★★½	56
Everblue 2	Capcom	★★★	66
Evergrace	Agetec	★★	39
EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Online Ent.	★★½	66
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	★★★	70
Evil Twin	Ubi Soft	★★	52
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	★★½	63
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	★	65
Extermination	Sony CEA	★★½	48
Extreme G III	Acclaim	★★★★	50
F1 2001	**EA Sports**	**★★★★★**	**52**
F1 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	60
F1 Career Challenge	**EA Sports**	**★★★★★**	**71**
F1 Championship	Ubi Soft	★★★★	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	★★½	41
Fantavision	Sony CEA	★★★★	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	★★★★	55
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	★★	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	★★★★½	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	**EA Sports**	**★★★★★**	**63**
Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	★½	64
Final Fantasy X	**Square EA**	**★★★★★**	**53**
⓫ **Finding Nemo**	**THQ**	★★★½	**71**
We searched and searched and we still couldn't find Nemo. Er, that is, we couldn't find codes for *Nemo*. If you come across any, shoot us an e-mail at **opm@ziffdavis.com** with the subject "Tricks."			
Fireblade	Midway	★★½	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	★★	67
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	★½	53
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	★★½	50
Freekstyle	EA Sports Big	★★★★	59
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	★★★	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	★★★½	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	★½	53
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	★★★	46
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	★★★½	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	★★★½	50
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	★½	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	★★	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	★★★	69
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	★★★½	46
The Getaway	Sony CEA	★★★★	66

.HACK//MUTATION
More fun with Grunties!

FLAG RACING

The Flag Race is a new side quest in the *.hack* series. It's only available on servers where you've raised all three of the Grunty types available for that server.

The object of the Flag Race is to race one of your Grunties through the Root Town while collecting three separate flags at fixed locations (you can collect the flags in any order). The race is timed and the clock stops when you reach the third flag. The top three times are kept as records, and you can win a prize if you defeat one of the times.

To start the Grunty Race, speak to the man at the Grunt Shop. Now that you've raised all three types of Grunties in the area, he provides instructions on how to run the race, recites the top three fastest scores, or he can start a race. Each race costs 100 GP.

SELECTING A GRUNTY – Θ SERVER

Each Grunty is rated in three categories: speed, acceleration, and turning. You can choose from the following Grunties on the Θ Server: Poison Grunty (low top speed, good turning and acceleration); Iron Grunty (good speed), and Noble Grunty (average skills in each category).

Here's what you receive for winning these races:

Θ Server Flag Race Prizes

Rating	Prize
Quit/Out of rank	Fortune Wire
Out of rank (within one second of 3rd)	Speed Charm
3rd place	Divine Cross
2nd place	Silver Grunty
1st place	Golden Grunty

EARNING THE MOST

Remember that you can win each prize up to three times, which is quite a haul if you're winning the Silver or Golden Grunties! Try to beat the third-place time by as small a margin as possible to make it easier to improve your score again. Then start going for second place and eventually first place. This is even more difficult than trying to race all out, but the prizes are certainly worthwhile.

SELECTING A GRUNTY – Λ SERVER

The Grunties on this server are rated in the same categories. You can choose from the following Grunties: Bony (good top speed); Snakey (low top speed, good turning and acceleration); and Noble (average stats).

Here's what you receive for winning these races:

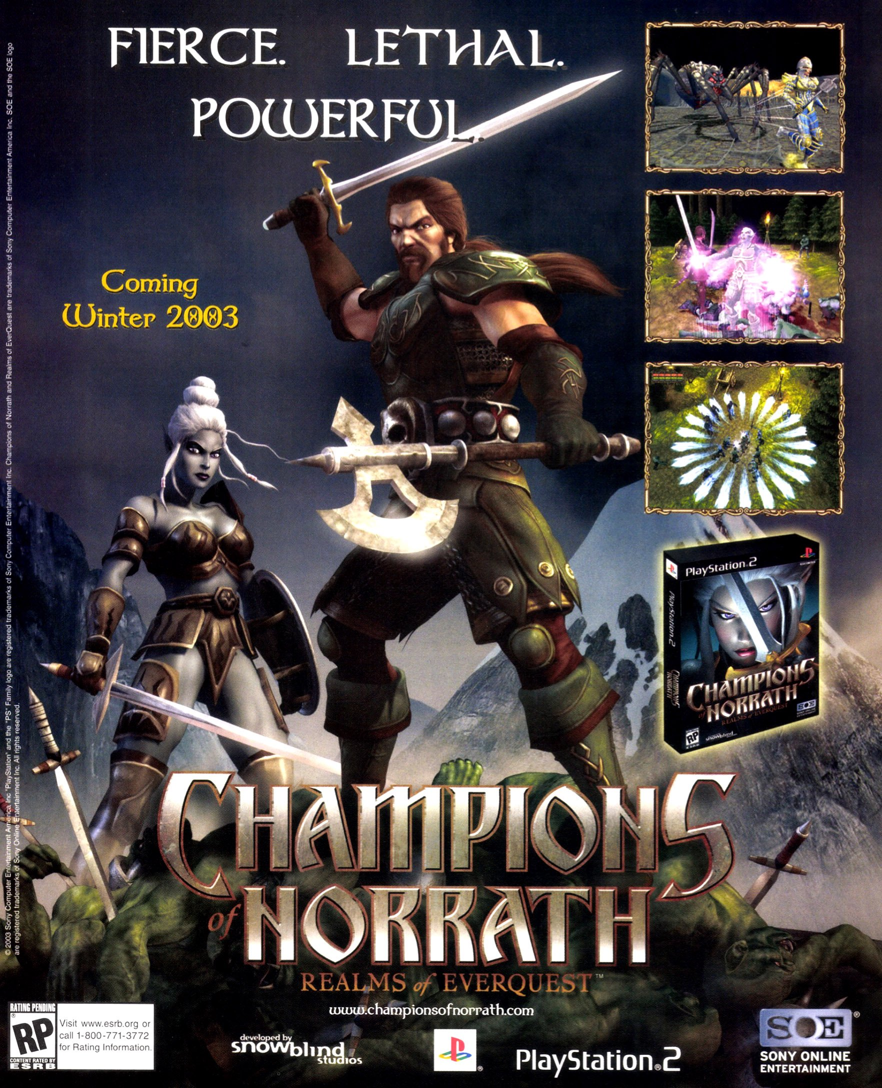
Rating	Prize
Quit/Out of rank	Fortune Wire
Out of rank (within one second of 3rd)	Fairy's Orb
3rd place	Emperor's Soul
2nd place	Silver Grunty
1st place	Golden Grunty

You receive a bonus prize along with your original first-place victory. This time it's Image 52 for your desktop.

GOLDEN GRUNTY

Win those races!

The first time you win a race (1st place), you gain Image 51 as well as the Golden Grunty. After winning any prize three times, you receive a yellow candy instead of the normal prize.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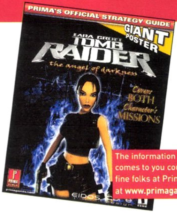
TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS

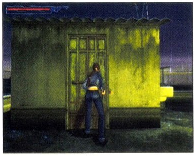
Lara's upgrade chart

Perhaps the most important part of Lara's continued evolution during her expedition is her strength-training regime. Lara begins the game with both her upper- and lower-body strength at level 1. Throughout her adventure, Lara must upgrade to continue.

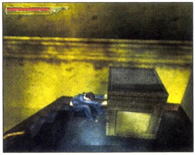

PRIMA'S OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE
GIANT POSTER
LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER
the angel of darkness
Covers BOTH Character's MISSIONS
EIDOS

The information in this guide comes to you courtesy of the fine folks at Prima. Visit them at www.primagames.com.

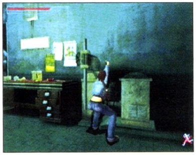
Building Up Lara's Upper Body

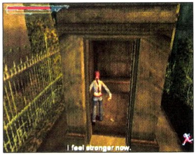


UPPER BODY LEVEL 2
Area: Parisian Back Streets
Upgrade Type: Grip
Lara's use of a crowbar to open a padlocked roof hut results in increased arm strength—perfect for hanging and shimmying.

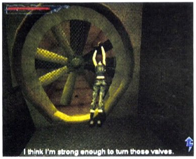


UPPER BODY LEVEL 3
Area: Derelict Apartments
Upgrade Type: Push Object
After using some legwork and pushing power to move a crate at the top of the stairs, Lara can shoulder open some doors.

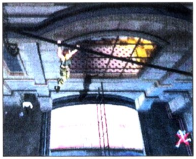




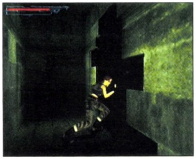
UPPER BODY LEVEL 4
Area: Parisian Ghettos (two alternates)
Upgrade Type: Shoulder Barge
This upper-body upgrade can be acquired by pulling a lever in Le Serpent Rouge's garage or by shouldering down a mausoleum door in St. Aicard's Graveyard.



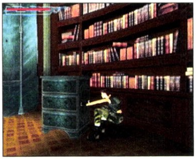
UPPER BODY LEVEL 5
Area: Louvre Storm Drains
Upgrade Type: Turn Valve
After halting the rotation of a propeller fan, Lara can build her body into a valve-turning machine.



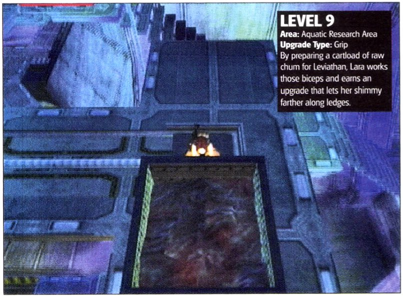
UPPER BODY LEVEL 6
Area: Louvre Galleries
Upgrade Type: Shoulder Barge
After shimmying along a high wire, Lara's upper body is stronger than ever. She can now shoulder through heavier doors.



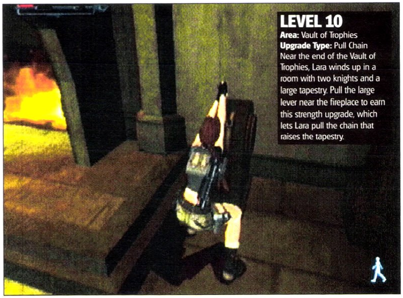
UPPER BODY LEVEL 7
Area: The Hall of Seasons
Upgrade Type: Grip
Lara can scale steep overhangs with ease after this wall-push workout at the top floor of the hall.



UPPER BODY LEVEL 8
Area: Monstrum Crime Scene
Upgrade Type: Shoulder Barge
By pulling a chest of drawers in Vasiley's apartment, Lara increases her upper-body strength.



LEVEL 9
Area: Aquatic Research Area
Upgrade Type: Grip
By preparing a cartload of raw chum for Leviathan, Lara works those biceps and earns an upgrade that lets her shimmy farther along ledges.



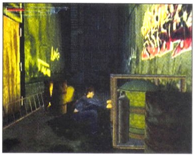
LEVEL 10
Area: Vault of Trophies
Upgrade Type: Pull Chain
Near the end of the Vault of Trophies, Lara winds up in a room with two knights and a large tapestry. Pull the large lever near the fireplace to earn this strength upgrade, which lets Lara pull the chain that raises the tapestry.

Do you think we're being too harsh on Lara? Tell us at opm@ziffdavis.com. Mark your emails "Stop dissing Lara"

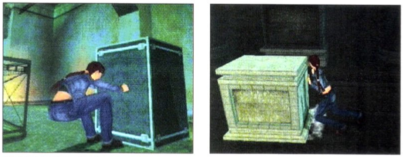
600,000 The number of copies of *Tomb Raider* shipped in the United States.

OVERHEARD
"Arrrggghhhhhhhhhhhh!" —Editor-in-Chief John Davison while reviewing *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*

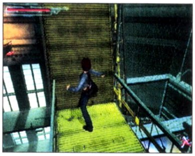
Building Up Lara's Lower Body



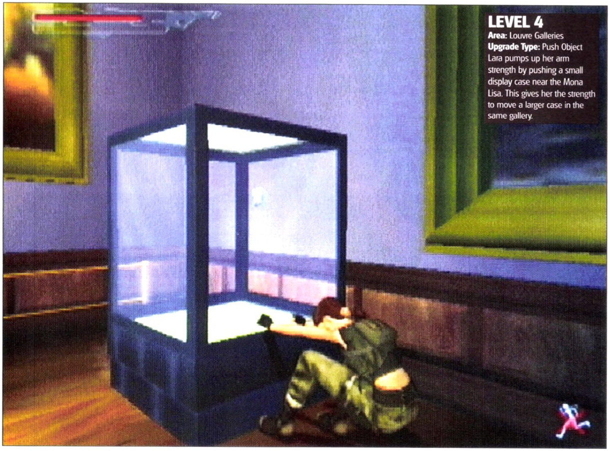
LOWER BODY LEVEL 2
Area: Industrial Rooftops
Upgrade Type: Jump
Pushing a large crate with a generator inside it allows Lara to leap farther.



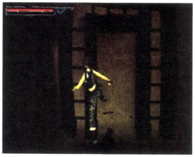
LOWER BODY LEVEL 2
Area: Parisian Ghettos
Upgrade Type: Jump (two alternates)
You can increase Lara's leg strength by pulling a crate in Le Serpent Rouge, or by pushing the stone altar in St. Aicard's Church.



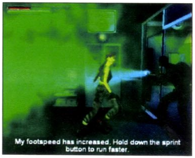
LOWER BODY LEVEL 3
Area: Parisian Ghettos
Upgrade Type: Kick Door/Wall
When Lara kicks the catwalk bridge in Le Serpent Rouge, her leg strength increases.



LEVEL 4
Area: Louvre Galleries
Upgrade Type: Push Object
Lara pumps up her arm strength by pushing a small display case near the Mona Lisa. This gives her the strength to move a larger case in the same gallery.

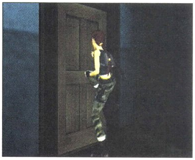


LOWER BODY LEVEL 5
Area: Tomb of Ancients
Upgrade Type: Kick Door/Wall
A swift kick to a door below the main chamber allows access to the Hall of Seasons.

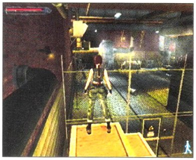


My footspeed has increased. Hold down the sprint button to run faster.

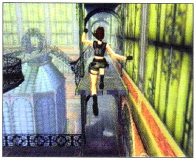
LOWER BODY LEVEL 6
Area: Galleries Under Siege
Upgrade Type: Dash Enable
Locating the respirator allows Lara the luxury of sprinting.



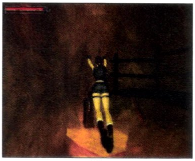
LOWER BODY LEVEL 7
Area: Von Croy's Apartment
Upgrade Type: Kick Door/Wall
A swift kick to a door behind the spiral stairs allows access upstairs and through a fire door.



LOWER BODY LEVEL 8
Area: Strahov Fortress
Upgrade Type: Push Object
After rearranging the stacked crates so the highest one is next to the saw room's fence, Lara becomes strong enough to push two stacked crates at once.



LOWER BODY LEVEL 9
Area: Bio-Research Facility
Upgrade Type: Jump
A leap across a large gap in the largest greenhouse area allows Lara to make even longer jumps.



LOWER BODY LEVEL 10
Area: The Lost Domain
Upgrade Type: Jump
A series of precise and strenuous jumps in an initial tunnel enables Lara to sprint and jump, thus allowing her to exit the middle chamber.

REAL-LIFE CHAMPS
Days after we led it to pigskin glory, Rice's baseball team won the school's first-ever sports championship. Go Owls!

NCAA FOOTBALL 2004

Turning your school's chumps into champs in just a few hours

It's a harsh but unavoidable reality of college football: With more than 100 teams in the game, only a handful stand a legitimate shot at going all the way. And wouldn't you know it? Your alma mater will be lucky to hit the .500 mark. Sure, it's your dream to take the play of your Northern Arizona Lumberjacks or Western Illinois Leathernecks to the level of an Ohio State or a Miami, but you just don't see that happening.

Well, we do. It may take some patience, but by following one of the following two paths, you'll find your school competing with the best of them every year in Dynasty mode.

The Hard, Honest Way

If you're patient (and really good!), you can earn your school some legitimate prestige simply by winning every game you play. The only tip we can give you here? Make things easier by playing on Junior Varsity. You'll still have a tough time, though.

The Easier, Not-So-Honest Way

In order to work your favorite team toward an honest chance at winning a national championship, it might take a few not-so-honest championship seasons to get you there. Using this method, we took Rice (one of those foolish schools that emphasizes "academics") from one-star pretenders to four-star contenders (out of six stars) in three seasons.

CREATE A PLAYMAKER OR TWO

If you're going to win enough to catch anyone's attention, you'll need someone to carry you to victory. This means creating at least one player before you start your Dynasty. For us, creating a QB with maxed-out stats was enough, as he found great pleasure in running 25 yards a pop after sending his receivers downfield. A maxed-out QB also makes a mean safety or kick returner. Having a maxed-out halfback will only help your cause.

KICK ASS FOR A FEW QUICK SEASONS

Sounds a bit tough given your roster, huh? Well, look at 2003, 2004, and maybe even the following year or two as not counting. Here's how to accomplish such a feat.

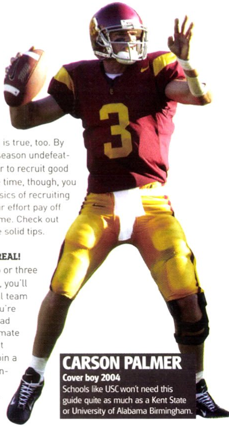
- **Play at Junior Varsity difficulty.** It's not imperative, but it helps. (Remember, these seasons don't count. You can play like a man at All-American when your team can compete.)
- **Give your schedule some validity.** A conference like the WAC isn't going to help your strength-of-schedule ranking. Try to configure it to include the likes of Miami, Tennessee, and Oklahoma.
- **Make every game an overtime game.** Unless you're ESPN's Mike Gottfried, you probably love college overtime. Did you realize there's an option to choose Overtime as your game's length as well? You can play a whole season in about an hour.
- **Make sure you win.** If it looks like you'll lose, hit the Start button followed by the Quit selection to try again. Cheap, but effective.

RECRUIT WISELY

When your team sucks, so do your chances at recruiting anybody decent. Luckily, the opposite is true, too. By going through your season undefeated, it becomes easier to recruit good players. At the same time, though, you need to know the basics of recruiting in order to make your effort pay off in the seasons to come. Check out the sidebar for some solid tips.

TIME TO PLAY FOR REAL!

Once you've had two or three undefeated seasons, you'll likely have an overall team rating around B—you're definitely ready to lead your school to legitimate greatness. You might even get invited to join a more prestigious conference as your Prestige meter continues its season-by-season rise.



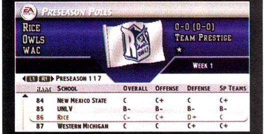
CARSON PALMER
Cover boy 2004
Schools like USC won't need this guide quite as much as a Kent State or University of Alabama Birmingham.

Who's going to win the real national championship this year? We simmed the season using *NCAA 2004*. The result: Miami pounds Oregon State, 31-2. Kansas State's Darren Sproles wins the Heisman.

IT'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT

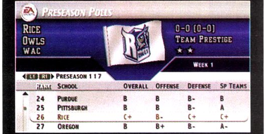
Earn prestige as you win championships

What you see below is the preseason bowls for seasons one, two, and four of our Rice experiment. Notice the gradual upgrades in Team Prestige and graded ratings. Keep in mind that national championships were won after seasons one and three, too. (No. 26?!)



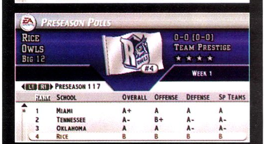
PRESEASON POLLS
RICE OWLS WAC
0-0 (0-0)
TEAM PRESTIGE ★
WEEK 1
PRESEASON 1 1 7

RANK	SCHOOL	OVERALL	OFFENSE	DEFENSE	SP TEAMS
84	NEW MEXICO STATE	C	C+	C	C+
85	UNLV	B-	B-	B-	B-
86	RICE	C-	C+	D+	C
87	WESTERN MICHIGAN	C	C	C+	C+



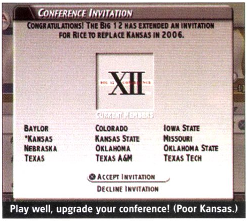
PRESEASON POLLS
RICE OWLS WAC
0-0 (0-0)
TEAM PRESTIGE ★ ★
WEEK 1
PRESEASON 1 1 7

RANK	SCHOOL	OVERALL	OFFENSE	DEFENSE	SP TEAMS
24	PURDUE	B	B	B-	B
25	PITTSBURGH	B	B	B-	A
26	RICE	C+	B-	C+	C+
27	OREGON	B	B+	B-	A-



PRESEASON POLLS
RICE OWLS BIG 12
#4
0-0 (0-0)
TEAM PRESTIGE ★ ★ ★ ★
WEEK 1
PRESEASON 1 1 7

RANK	SCHOOL	OVERALL	OFFENSE	DEFENSE	SP TEAMS
1	MIAMI	A+	A	A	A
2	TENNESSEE	A-	B+	A-	A-
3	OKLAHOMA	A	A	A-	A-
4	RICE	B	B	B	B

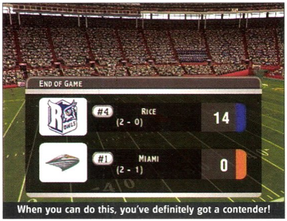


CONFERENCE INVITATION
CONGRATULATIONS! THE BIG 12 HAS EXTENDED AN INVITATION FOR RICE TO REPLACE KANSAS IN 2006.
XII
CURRENT MEMBERS

BAYLOR	COLORADO	IOWA STATE
*KANSAS	KANSAS STATE	MISSOURI
NEBRASKA	OKLAHOMA	OKLAHOMA STATE
TEXAS	TEXAS A&M	TEXAS TECH

ACCEPT INVITATION
DECLINE INVITATION

Play well, upgrade your conference! (Poor Kansas.)



END OF GAME

#4	RICE	(2 - 0)	14
#1	MIAMI	(2 - 1)	0

When you can do this, you've definitely got a contender!

RECRUIT THE WINNERS

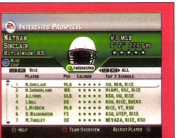
- **Start with your interested prospects.** Before scoping out the cream of the crop, take a look at the high-school stars who're actually interested in you. You obviously stand a better chance with them.

- **Gauge interest before pursuing a prospect.** If a prospect's interest is green or high blue, he's worth pursuing—especially if he's located nearby. Don't bother if he's not even remotely interested, though.

- **Pay attention to your pitch.** Usually, one of the four available pitches (Prestige, Location, Playing Time, and Coaching Style) will appeal most to a prospect. Use common sense to choose your selection. Even after a national championship, our Owls only crept up from one star to two—so pitching Prestige for your less-than-prestigious school should only be a last resort for any team of less than four-star quality. Location often works for prospects from your state or surrounding states. Playing Time is a good first pitch if you need a quality player in a position where you're weak. And Coaching Style is best pitched when nothing else seems quite right. DON'T FORGET: After a week has passed, hit Select to see how your pitch went over. If it didn't fare well, change it to the next most logical thing!

- **Focus on your needs and weaknesses.** When you hold down ◎ to see a breakdown of each position, make it your first priority to seek players for positions listed as "needed." Go for some four- and five-star players, sure, but don't neglect the three-star prospects out there in case your shot at a blue-chipper should fall through. If you're confident that you've approached enough "needed" ones, your next focus should be recruiting for the positions you're weak at—anything graded below a C deserves attention. Also, if a good kicker or punter is attainable, pursue him no matter what.

- **Cut the losers.** If all goes well, you'll be cutting a lot of upperclassmen in favor of freshmen...players who have names other than the likes of QB #6.



INTERESTED PROSPECTS
NATHAN SINCLAIR
HUTCHINSON, KS
BLUE CHIP
#3 MLB
6' 2" 226 LBS
★★★★★
INTERESTED
RICE
ALL

	PLAYER	POS	CALIBER	TOP 3 SCHOOLS
1	N.SINCLAIR	MLB	★★★★★	OU, NEB, RICE
2	H.SUTHERLAND	WR	★★★★★	MIAMI, USC, RICE
3	A.LYONS	OLB	★★★★★	KSU, OU, RICE
4	J.GILL	DE	★★★★★	KSU, RICE, BUCKS
5	L.MCGREW	MLB	★★★★★	RICE, VT, KSU
6	D.WASHINGTON	FS	★★★★★	KSU, UTEP, RICE
7	M.TINSLEY	DE	★★★★★	NEVADA, RICE, KSU

Win a few championships, get the blue chips.

11 mil. The number of copies of *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec* that have sold so far worldwide. That's a lot, huh?

www.ncaasports.com The official site of, you guessed it, NCAA Sports.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	★★★½	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	★★★½	53
Godai: Elemental Force	3DO	★½	54
Gradius III and IV	Konami	★★½	39
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**46**
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	★★★½	68
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	**Rockstar**	★★★★★	**63**
Grand Theft Auto III	**Rockstar**	★★★★★	**52**
Grandia II	Ubi Soft	★★★½	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	★★★½	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	½	61
GTC Africa	Majesco	★★½	58
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	★★★★	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	★★★★	66
Gungrave	Sega	★★★½	61
Gungriffon Blaze	Working Designs	★★★½	39
Half-Life	**Sierra**	★★★★★	**51**
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	★★★½	64
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	★★★★	51
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	★★★½	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	★★★	57
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	★★★	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	★★½	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	★★★	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	★★★★	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	★★★★½	55
High Heat MLB 2004	**3DO**	★★★★★	**67**
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Eidos	★★★★½	63
Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony CEA	★★★★	55
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	★★½	64
③ **The Hulk**	**Vivendi Universal**	★★★★	**70**
Here's how to help Bruce Banner avoid getting angry.			
Double Hulk HP	HLTHDSE		
Half Enemies' HP	MMMYHLP		
Regenerator	FLSHWND		
Invincibility	GMMSKIN		
Unlimited Continues	GRNCHTR		
Level Select	TRUBLVR		
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	★★½	67
Ico	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**50**
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	★★★	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	★★★	71
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	★★★½	65
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubi Soft	★★★½	53
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**52**
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	EA Games	★★★★	52
James Bond 007: NightFire	Activision	★★★★½	64
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	★★	65
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	★	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	★★	63
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	★½	54
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubi Soft	★★★	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	★★★★½	68
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	★★	71
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	★★★½	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	★★★	42
Kessen	EA Games	★★★	39
Kessen II	Koei	★★★	51
Kinetica	Sony CEA	★★★★½	50
The King of Route 66	Sega	★★★	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	★★	55
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	★★★★½	61
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	★★★★½	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	★★★★	55
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	★★½	48
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	★★★	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubi Soft	★½	54
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	★★½	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	★★★	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	★★★	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	★★½	51
Lethal Skies	Sammy	★★★	58
The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	★★★½	63

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	★★★★½	63
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	★★	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	★★★	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	★★★★½	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	48
Madden NFL 2003	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**60**
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	★★★★	69
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	★★★	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	★★★★	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	★★★★	60
Max Payne	Rockstar	★★★★	53
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	Capcom	★★★½	54
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	★★★½	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	**EA Games**	★★★★★	**5**
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	★★½	60
Metal Gear Solid 2	**Konami**	★★★★★	**51**
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	**Konami**	★★★★★	**67**
Metropolismania	Natsume	★★★	61
Midnight Club	**Rockstar**	★★★★	**39**
⑤ **Midnight Club II**	**Rockstar**	★★★★★	**67**
TOO FAST? TOO FURIOUS? What to do if you're a hopeless slowpoke? Try these codes! Go the Cheats menu from the Options menu, then input these exactly as they appear below.			
All Locations and Cars	rimbuk		
Guns and Rockets	savethekids		
(Fire with L3 and R3 in Arcade mode.)			
Unlimited Nitro Boosts	greenLantern		
Invulnerable	gladiator		
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	★	58
Minority Report	Activision	★★½	65
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	★★★½	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	★★★	67
MLB Slugfest 20-03	Midway	★★★★	59
MLB Slugfest 20-04	Midway	★★★★	67
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	★★★½	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	★★★½	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	★	48
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	★★★	54
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	★★★	65
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	★★★★	50
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	★★★½	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Midway	★★★★	64
MotoGP	Namco	★★★★	39
MotoGP2	Namco	★★★★½	53
MotoGP3	Namco	★★★★½	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	★★★	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	★★★	46
The Mummy Returns	Universal	★½	52
Music Maker	Magix	★★★★	69
⑬ **MVP Baseball 2003**	**EA Sports**	★★★½	**67**
HOMER ODYSSEY Create a powerhouse from scratch: Enter "Erik Kiss" as your player's name and he'll hit a homer every time.			
OH, SNAP For something a little flashier, create a player named Keegn Patersn, Jacob Patersn, or Ziggy Patersn. These gents will break a bat nearly every time they hit the ball.			
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★★	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	★★★½	52
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★½	59
My Street	Sony CEA	★★★	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubi Soft	★★★½	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	★★½	64
Namco Museum	Namco	★★★½	53
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	★★½	40
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	★★★★	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	★★★★½	62
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	★★★½	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	★★★	71
NBA 2K2	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**53**
NBA 2K3	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**63**
NBA Hoopz	Midway	★★★	44
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	★★★	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	★★½	51
NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	★★★★	63

REPLAY FORUM

GTA: VICE CITY–BEACH-COMBING

If you have nothing better to do, why not spend some quality time combing the beaches of Vice City. Take a helicopter to the waterfront, pitch the nose down until the blades just scrap the sand, and watch the action. See how many sunbathers you can get to the gallon. And true to form, the designers anticipated the physics that apply to rapidly rotating blades coming into contact with random people. Maybe it's not the most socially acceptable thing to do, but hey, you *are* Tony V....

Frank Calcagno
frank_calcagno@msn.com

HITMAN 2: HIDDEN WEAPON?

I was playing *Hitman 2: Silent Assassin* when I noticed an extra weapon slot above the fiber wire slot. It looks like a necklace or something. I beat the game but nothing happened and no websites can tell me what it is or how to get it.

Vetrax666
eatmg@yahoo.com

The word on the street is that the slot was for a rosary, which could be used as a strangling tool. But since it was basically the same as the fiber wire, it was left out of the final game.

GTA: VICE CITY–AMPHIBIOUS!

I went into a Pay & Spray with a helicopter, and when I came out, it had wheels! So I activated the cars on water cheat, and now I can land on the water.

llosier@rogers.com

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	★★½	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	★★★	63
NBA Starting Five	Konami	★★½	63
NBA Street	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**47**
④ **NBA Street Vol. 2**	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**68**
Want to unlock the phattest jerseys and ballers, but don't want to work your way through all of the game modes? You so lazy. Try this:			
• Go to Play It, then to Pick Up Game.			
• Name yourself and choose a team.			
• At My Rules, spot yourself 10 points and play to 11.			
• Score one bucket and you'll win.			
• Win five, 10, and 15 games in a row to start the unlockables rolling in.			
NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	★★★★	64
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	★★½	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	★	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	989 Sports	★½	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	★★½	64
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	48
NCAA Football 2003	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**60**
NCAA Football 2004	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**71**
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	★½	41
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	★★	61
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	★★★	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	★★★	64
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	**EA Games**	★★★★★	**62**
NFL 2K2	**Sega Sports**	★★★½	**52**
NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	★★★★½	60
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	★★★★	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	★★★½	60
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	★	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	★½	53
NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	★★½	61
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	★★½	50
NHL 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	★★★½	63
NHL 2K3	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**64**
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	★★★½	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	★★	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	★★★★	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	★★★★½	62
Ninja Assault	Namco	★★½	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	★★★½	56
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	★★★	51
Oni	Rockstar	★½	43
Onimusha: Warlords	**Capcom**	★★★★	**43**
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	★★★★	60
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	★★★	39
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	★★	60
Pac-Man World 2	Namco	★★★★½	54
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	★★★½	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	★★	53
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	★★★½	55
Portal Runner	3DO	★★	50
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	★★	65
Pride FC	THQ	★★★★	65
Primal	Sony CEA	★★★★	68
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	★★★★½	65
Project Eden	Eidos	★★★½	52
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	★★½	60
P.T.O. IV	Koei	★★★	66
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take 2	★★★½	40
Quake III Revolution	EA Games	★★★★½	44
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	★★★	64
Ratchet & Clank	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**63**
Rayman 2: Revolution	**Ubi Soft**	★★★★★	**41**
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubi Soft	★★★½	67
Rayman Arena	Ubi Soft	★★★½	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	★★½	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	★★★★	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	★★★½	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	★★★	57
Red Faction	**THQ**	★★★★★	**46**

www.soulcalibur.com
For all your *Soul Calibur* needs.
Character bios, background, the works.

SOUL CALIBUR II

5 Tips to raise your fighting calibur

So you've been getting your ass kicked, huh? What, are you too lazy to go through the Weapon Master mode, and learning like the rest of us? Yeah? Oh, well you're in luck—here are five tips that are guaranteed to improve your game immediately. It's not rocket science, but Soul Calibur 2 is a pretty deep game. Using quick tips will improve your chances at survival, regardless of which character you use.

CASSANDRA

She rocks, hard

Nightmare might have that huge sword, but Cassandra is a spectacular fighter. Start wailing on some of her fancier moves and she can run rings around anyone.

Air Control

PRACTICE
RAPHAEL
NECRID

Yeah, it sounds like some kind of gastronomical trapeze trick, but it's actually a vital game mechanic in *SC2*, especially if you get ringed-out a lot. The big secret is this: you can control your character when it's in the air, and doing so is vital when you're trying to avoid falling out of the ring after a throw, or getting out of the way of some character's vicious follow-up attacks. It's easy to do—just press the d-pad in the direction you want to fall.

Use the Walls

You know how most arenas in *SC2* have walls in them? They're not there by accident, and they certainly aren't decorations. They're actually there so you can beat the crap of your enemies against them. And guess what? They actually do damage. The trick is to get your opponent close to a wall, beat them to within an inch of their life with your favorite combo, and watch the extra damage stack. It's embarrassing for them, effective for you, and, as one would imagine, fun for the wall.

Guard Impact

If you're playing against a bunch of rookies, this will guarantee that you'll wipe the floor with them for at least as long as it takes for them to learn to do this themselves. You'll also be surprised at how many "advanced" players don't do this as much as they should. Basically, Guard Impact allows you to repel an opponent's attack, and leaves them vulnerable for a second or so for a counter-attack. You have to anticipate their attack for it to work (c'mon, you can do it), the press FORWARD and GUARD if it's a high attack, or BACK and GUARD if it's a low attack. Note that both of these will work for mid-range attacks.

ARCADE
IVY
CASSANDRA

Use the Guard Impact if you want to play like a pro

Is this the best fighting game ever? Or is Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution? Write us at opm@ziffdavis.com

WHO WAS CASSANDRA? Cassandra (also called Alexandra) is the Trojan seeress who was pretty heavy with the prophecies (thanks to some input from Apollo), but no-one ever believed her. Most famous prophecy? She knew about the Trojan Horse thing before it happened. True story.

IVY
NIGHTMARE

8-Way Run

ARCADE
IVY
NIGHTMARE

SC2 sure as hell ain't a 2D fighting game. It's not even one of those cheap 3D imitations that forces you to constantly face your opponent. No, you can actually move in three dimensions here, and, as you'd imagine, the game rewards you for doing so. Just hold the D-pad in any direction, and watch your character circle your opponent. It's great for evading attacks, moving in for throws, and generally confusing the heck out of your enemies. It doesn't end there, though—while running, your basic □, △, and ○ attacks will change, often in surprising ways. So again, experiment.

STAGE 3 4'33"46
IVY
ASTAROTH

Soul Charge

Few people use Guard Impact, but even fewer use Soul Charge. You'll definitely recognize it—you've done it on accident like a million times. You do it be pressing □, △, and ○ at the same time, and, depending on how long you hold it down, it gets more intense. There are three levels of Soul Charge, and the effects it has on attacks are wildly varied—they're different from character-to-character, move-to-move. So experiment. Some attacks will do more damage, some will come out faster, and some will stun opponents even if they block. Work it into your game, and you'll be a killer.

MEET THE CONTESTANTS

ON THE DISC

Checked out the demo of Soul Calibur 2 on this month's demo disc? No? Well what the heck are you waiting for! Here's an introduction to the two playable characters featured in the demo.

Cassandra

WHY CHOOSE HER?

Like Sophitia in Soul Edge, Cassandra is very agile and can pull off some fantastic moves. Give her a try!

SOME BASIC MOVES

Slide Flood	□, △, △
Reverse Mirage	↘ + □, △
Splash Gust	△, ○
Holy Middle Kick	↙ + □
Angel Squash	↓↘→, △
Aeolus Turn	□ + △
Seraphim Kicks	↘ + ○, ○
Catharsis Star	← + □, △

TRY THESE COMBOS

1. ↘ △, ↓↘→ + △
2. □ + △, ↘ △
3. ←, ← ○, →, → □ + △
4. △ →, ←, ← + △ + ○

Nightmare

WHY CHOOSE HIM?

Simply put, Nightmare is powerhouse. His sword has a massive reach and his moves inflict tons of damage.

SOME BASIC MOVES

Slash Cross	□, □, △
Double Grounder	□ ↓ □, □
Gauntlet Buster	△ →
Backspin Slash	← □
Night Back Stance	△+○
Armor Pierce	↓ △, △, △
Dark Bite	↘ □
Rook Splitter	↓, ↓ △

TRY THESE COMBOS

1. → ○, ←, △
2. ↓↘→ + hold ○, ↓, □ + △
3. →, → □, ← △
4. □ →, ← △

SOME NEW FACES

It was worth the wait afterall

Guess what? The U.S. version of Soul Calibur II actually has three more characters than the Japanese version did! **Berserker**, a gigantic beast with a big axe, **Assassin**, a turban-wearing ninja with a sword, and **Lizardman**, a man-lizard. Well, these characters actually were in the Japanese version of the game, but just not playable. Now you can use 'em. Take that, Japan!

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Red Faction II	THQ	★★★★	63
Reign of Fire	Bam	★★★½	63
Resident Evil–Code: Veronica X	**Capcom**	**★★★★½**	**48**
❻ **Resident Evil: Dead Aim**	**Capcom**	**★★★½**	**70**

Like most *Resident Evil* games, *Dead Aim* doesn't really have cheats, per se. But here's what you get after beating the game with a high rating:

MODE	RATING	DESCRIPTION
Easy	A	All handguns and shotgun
Easy	S	All weapons except charged particle rifle
Normal	A	All weapons except charged particle rifle
Normal	S	All weapons except charged particle rifle with unlimited ammunition
Extreme	A	All weapons except charged particle rifle with unlimited ammunition
Extreme	S	All weapons with unlimited ammunition

Plus, you'll get the option to play as Fong Ling from the beginning once you've beaten the game one time on any difficulty, with any rating.

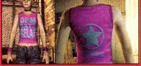
GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
❼ **Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR**	**Activision**	**★★★½**	**71**

Sorry, Adolf, no codes here. You don't even open up the original *Wolfenstein 3D* after beating the game, like you do with the Xbox version. Didn't we tell you? We PS2 owners got *screwed*.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Rez	Sega	★★★★½	53
Ridge Racer V	Namco	★★★★½	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	★★★½	61
Ring of Red	Konami	★★★★	43
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	★★★	62
Road Trip	Conspiracy	★★★★	61
Rocky	Ubi Soft	★★★★	64
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	★★★★	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	★★★½	62
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	Koei	★★½	60
RTX Red Rock	LucasArts	★★	71
Rugby	EA Sports	★★★½	48
Rumble Racing	EA Games	★★★★½	45
Rune: Viking Warlord	Take 2	★★½	48
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	★★★★½	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	★★½	55
Savage Skies	Bam	★★★	56
Scooby-Doo: Night of 100 Frights	THQ	★★★	58
The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian	Universal	★★	62
Seek and Destroy	Conspiracy	★★★½	66
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	Sega	★★★	62
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	★★	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	★★★★½	60
Shadow Hearts	Midway	★★★★	52
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	★★★½	43
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	★★	57
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	★★½	52
Shifters	3DO	★	58
Shinobi	Sega	★★★½	63
Shox	EA Sports Big	★★★½	63
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	★★½	64
Silent Hill 2	**Konami**	**★★★★½**	**50**
Silent Hill 3	Konami	★★★★½	71
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	★★★½	70
Silent Scope	Konami	★★★	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	★★★½	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	★★★½	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	★★★½	40
The Simpsons: Road Rage	**EA Games**	**★★★**	**52**
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	★½	64
The Sims	EA Games	★★★★	65
Sky Gunner	Atlus	★★★½	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	★★★	40
Sled Storm	EA Big	★★★½	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	**Sony CEA**	**★★★★★**	**62**
Smash Cars	Metro3D	★★★½	71
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament	Namco	★★★½	56
Smuggler's Run	**Rockstar**	**★★★★½**	**39**
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	★★★★½	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	★★	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	★★★½	59
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	**★★★★★**	**60**

NICE DUDS

Once you've beaten *Silent Hill 3*, you'll be able to enter codes for new outfits. Try this one: SH3_OPiuM.



SILENT HILL 3

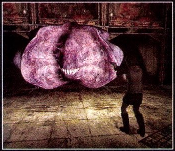
All five bosses, all five puzzles (in Regular difficulty, anyway)

Bosses

SPLITWORM

Location: Alternate Shopping Mall

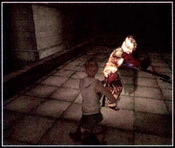
In Regular difficulty, this beastie isn't tough at all. The worst part is guessing which of the six tunnels he's going to pop out of, so **keep moving around and tapping R2**—that way, you'll lock on to him as soon as he shows his phallic mug. Once you've got his location, the rest is easy: **Stay out of his reach until he opens up his shell**, then pop three slugs into him. It shouldn't take more than a clip or two to give this guy a really bad day. Don't feel bad for him, though; since it's the last day of his life, things can't possibly get any worse.



MISSIONARY

Location: Apartment Building

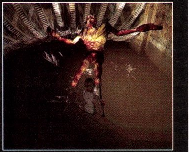
This guy is definitely tougher than ol' Splitsville, but there's not much more technique. The trick is to **get him to rush at you, but not be there when he arrives—just move off to the side.** He'll lash out and leave you a great opening. This is a perfect opportunity to use the Shotgun (remember, the closer you are to your target with this weapon, the greater the damage). He has two different attacks: One is a slow lunge, the other is a quick slash that cannot be blocked.



LEONARD

Location: Alternate Hospital

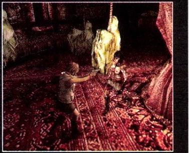
Leonard: pure textbook paranoid, schizoid, psychopath, with a hell of a reach. And on top of it all, he can scuttle around like an undersea cockroach, making it tough to keep a bead on him. Your best bet is to **hold down R2 and L2**, which will keep Heather turned toward him as long as he's in range. When he surfaces, try not to be right in front of him, or he'll thwack you with his grotesque arms. **Keep laying into him from the moment he breaks the surface** and you'll keep him so busy he won't have a chance to swing.



ALESSA

Location: Amusement Park

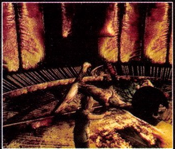
Alessa has four different forms, but you really need only two tactics for her. In the first and third forms (when she's carrying the Knife and the Pipe, respectively), **keep your distance and use your Pistol**. In the second and fourth forms (Pistol and Submachine Gun), **get in close and use the Katana**. Be careful, though: She's pretty good at blocking direct attacks, so you'll be much more likely to land a blow on her if you block one of her attacks first. Hope you have some Health Drinks handy.



THE GOD

Location: The Church

The God starts off standing; you can back off and wait and she will eventually lie down, or you can **shoot her in the face twice with your Pistol and bring her down quickly**. Once she's down, any close-up attack will earn a bone-jarring smack. So, if you have lots of ammo but little health, **stay outside the semicircle on the floor and fire away**. If you have lots of health but little ammo, **use your Katana or Maul to get close** and take the hits. If you have no health and no ammo, well, you're screwed.

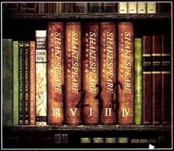


Puzzles

SHAKESPEARE

Location: Bookstore

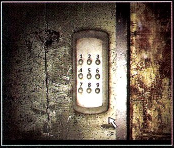
You've no doubt figured out that you need to pick up all the books and place them on the shelf in an order that allows you to read the numbers on their spines. However, it's very easy to miss the fact that **there are four numbers—one often falls into the cracks between two books**. The numbers change randomly with each new game, so we can't tell you exactly what they'll be. Just keep shuffling those books around until you see four numbers evenly spaced across the book spines.



ALGEBRA-TASTIC!

Location: Brookhaven Hospital, Second Floor

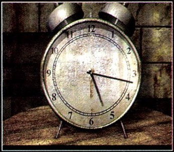
Try to figure this one out in your head and you'll go insane. Instead, let's examine what we know in algebraic terms: We've got four digits **(a, b, c, and d)**. The second is twice the third **(b = 2c)**. The fourth is half the first **(a = 2d)**. So now our four digits are **2d, 2c, c, and d**. We also know that c is less than d (which means **2c is less than 2d**) and that three of the numbers have values greater than three. And since the first two digits have to be even numbers more than four and less than nine, there's only one possible solution: **8634**.



BRIEFCASE

Location: Brookhaven Hospital

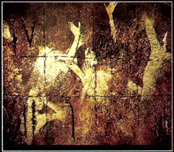
This one shouldn't be as hard as it is—just enter the time from the clock into the briefcase lock—but there's this one little wrinkle that some people overlook. Let's say the clock reads 10:58. You enter 1058 into the combination lock, and... nothing. But remember that there are 24 hours in the day...and **10:58 PM is known, in some countries, as 22:58**. Inside the briefcase, you'll get a Polaroid camera—take that down into the basement to photograph the back of the bloody shelf and you'll get the code for the third floor.



CREMATORIUM

Location: Alternate Hospital, Sub-Sub-Basement

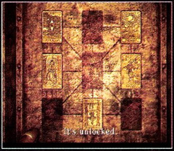
All those numbers! If you knew the right order to put them in, you'd be able to retrieve the Cremated Key. Luckily, there's a diagram right in front of your nose, on the door of the crematorium. It shows a series of four Roman numerals in positions that change randomly with each new game. Position I is the first number to enter into the lock, position II is the second, and so on. Just **use the diagram as a map of the room; the numbers to the lock are written in blood at the feet of the tables.**



TAROT CARDS

Location: Alessa's Bedroom

Luckily, this one doesn't change from game to game. The riddle in the sketchbook can be a bit ambiguous due to the fact that both The Moon and The Eye of Night can be associated with "the night sky," so here are the proper positions for the five cards: **The Hanged Man–bottom center; The High Priestess–middle left; The Eye of Night–upper left; The Fool–middle right; The Moon–upper right.** Oh, and in case you get stuck in the church shortly after this point...use the pendant.



Scary or silly? Write us at opm@ziffdavis.com and title the e-mail *Replay: Silent Hill 3.*

> "It's not often we see a survival-horror game with this much emphasis on horror."
> —*Silent Hill 3* review, *OPM* 71.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	★★★	52
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	★★★	52
Space Race	Infogrames	★★½	59
Speed Kings	Acclaim	★★★★	70
Spider-Man	Activision	★★★★½	57
Splashdown	Infogrames	★★★★	52
⑨ **Splinter Cell**	**Sony CEA**	★★★★½	**68**

Go anywhere, do anything—why not? You're a splinter cell, after all. Use these keypad codes if you get into a jam.

MISSION	LOCATION	
TRAINING	Keypad Door	28469
1 - POLICE STATION	Balcony Door	091772
4 - CIA HQ	Technical Services Room	7687
	Generator Backup Room	110598
	Storage Room	2977
	Main Server Room	2019
	Weapons Testing Department	110700
	West Entrance to Information Retrieval	0614
5 - KALINATEK	Security Door	97531
	Archives Department	33575
	Back Door on Third Floor	1250
6 - NUCLEAR POWER PLANT	Cooling Rod Control Room	560627
	Door to Maintenance Shaft	151822
	Maintenance Shaft	795021
8 - ABBOTOIR	Door to Ceiling	770215
9 - CHINESE EMBASSY	Door to Hall	1423
	Door at Back of Warehouse	1456
	Door to Elevator	7921
	Door to General Keirong's Office	1836
10 - PRESIDENTIAL PALACE	Garden Gate	2126
	Door to Corridor	70021

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Spy Hunter	Midway	★★★★½	50
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	Vivendi Universal	★★★	64
SSX	**EA Sports BIG**	★★★★★	**38**
SSX: Tricky	**EA Sports BIG**	★★★★★	**52**
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	★★½	53
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	LucasArts	★★★	64
Star Wars The Clone Wars	LucasArts	★★★	65
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	★★	45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	★★★½	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	★★★★½	55
Star Wars Starfighter	**LucasArts**	★★★★½	**43**
State of Emergency	Rockstar	★★★	55
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	★★½	59
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	★★★½	39
Street Hoops	Activision	★★★½	60
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	★★★½	47
Stuntman	Infogrames/Atari	★★★	59
Sub Rebellion	Metro 3D	★★★★	62
Suikoden III	Konami	★★★	63
Summoner	THQ	★★★	39
Summoner 2	THQ	★★★½	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubi Soft	★★★½	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	★★★	41
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubi Soft	★★★½	63
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	★★½	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	★★★½	63
Surfing H30	Rockstar	★★	40
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	★★★	38
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubi Soft	★★★½	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	★★★½	60
Tekken 4	Namco	★★★½	61
Tekken Tag Tournament	**Namco**	★★★★½	**39**
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	★★★	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	★★½	63
Test Drive	Infogrames	★★★½	58
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	★★★	48
Tetris Worlds	THQ	★★	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	★★★★	41
The Thing	Universal	★★★	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	★½	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	★★★	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	★★★★	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	★★★★½	63

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Time Crisis 2	Namco	★★★★	49
TimeSplitters	**Eidos**	★★★★★	**39**
TimeSplitters 2	**Eidos**	★★★★★	**63**
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	★★½	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubi Soft	★★★½	65
① **Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness**	**Eidos**	★★	**72**

Here are a few undocumented Lara moves to prolong the agony.

HANDSTAND While hanging from a ledge, hold L1 and press ⬆.

SWAN DIVE While standing, hold L1, press ⬆, and tap ○.

BACK FLIP With your back to a ledge, hold L1 and press ⊗.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	**Activision**	★★★★★	**51**
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	**Activision**	★★★★★	**63**
Top Angler	Xicat	★★★½	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	★★★½	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	★★★	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	★	66
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	★★★½	57
Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	★★★½	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	★★	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	★★	45
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	★★★	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	★½	62
Twisted Metal: Black	**SCEA**	★★★★★	**47**
Twisted Metal: Black Online	SCEA	★★★★	61
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	EA Games	★★★	62
UFC Throwdown	Infogrames	★★★½	58
Unison	Tecmo	★★★½	44
⑮ **Unlimited Saga**	**Square Enix**	★★	**70**

Come on, think about it. This game is specifically designed to be so excruciatingly difficult that it takes a truly hardcore RPGer to beat it. Do you really think Square would put in any cheat codes?

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	★★½	40
V-Rally 3	Infogrames	★★★★½	64
Vampire Night	Namco	★★½	52
Vexx	Acclaim	★★	67
Victorious Boxers	Empire	★★★½	51
Virtua Fighter 4	**Sega**	★★★★★	**55**
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	★★★★½	70
War Jetz	3DO	★★½	48
War of the Monsters	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**64**
Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	★★½	44
Wave Rally	Eidos	★½	53
Way of the Samurai	Bam	★★★½	59
Whirl Tour	Vivendi Universal	★★	63
Whiteout	Konami	★	65
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	★★★½	62
Wild Wild Racing	Interplay	★★★	39
Winback	Koei	★★★★	43
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	★★★★½	57
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	Atlus	★★★	53
Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park	Dreamcatcher	★★★	57
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	★★★	42
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	★★★★	55
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	★★★★	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l	**Konami**	★★★★★	**67**
World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony CEA	★★★★	53
World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony CEA	★★★★	65
WRC: World Rally Championship	**Bam**	★★★★★	**57**
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	★★	63
WTA Tour Tennis	Konami	★	57
WWE Crush Hour	THQ	★★½	68
WWE SmackDown!: Shut Your Mouth	THQ	★★½	64
WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It	**THQ**	★★★½	**52**
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	★★★★½	64
X Squad	EA Games	★★★½	38
X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Activision	★★★	69
Xenosaga: Episode 1—Der Wille Zur Macht	Namco	★★★★	66
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	Koei	★★★½	49
Yu-Gi-Oh!: The Duelists of the Roses	Konami	★★½	67
Zapper	Infogrames	★★½	64
Z.O.E: Zone of the Enders	Konami	★★★★½	44
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	★★★★½	68

REPLAY FORUM

GTA: VICE CITY–HIT THE G-SPOTLIGHT

I found a very easy way to do the G-Spotlight mission at the film studio: Using the motorcycle it provides you with, go through the first couple of jumps and then get the helicopter you find on the roof of the Hyman Condos (you'll need to buy the property first or the helicopter won't be there). Then, just land in each pink marker with the chopper to complete the mission. This is a pretty hard mission with the motorcycle, but the helicopter makes it a whole lot easier.

Nick Killion
krazybaddude@netcarrier.com

Isn't that cheating? Oh, right. Nice work.

WOTM: GET THE SKINNY

In *War of the Monsters*, how do you get Agamo's fourth skin?

Patrick Tennin
afropungie@yahoo.com

You need a save from *Twisted Metal Black* on your memory card, and that save needs to have the game beaten with Sweet Tooth. Once you've got that, load up *WOTM* with that memory card in the slot and you'll get Agamo's fourth outfit: Mecha Sweet Tooth!

TIMESPLITTERS 2: REMOTE TURRETS

In a *TimeSplitters 2* preview, you said there'd be remote guns in Map Maker. I can't find them; were they taken out?

Michael W.
Ontario, Canada

Yep. Sorry.

PS1 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
007 Racing	EA Games	★★★	41
3Xtreme	989 Studios	★	21
40 Winks	GT Interactive	★★★★	28
102 Dalmatians: Puppies to the Rescue	Eidos	★★★½	41
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	★★★★	58
A Bug's Life	**Sony CEA**	★★	**15**
Ace Combat 2	**Namco**	★★★★★	**1**
Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere	Namco	★★★	31
Aces of the Air	Agetec	½	64
Action Bass	Take 2	★★	37
Action Man: Operation Extreme	Hasbro	★★★	41
Air Hockey	Mud Duck	★★★½	70
Akuji the Heartless	Crystal Dynamics	★★★	18
Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge	Sony CEA	★★	45
Alexi Lalas International Soccer	Rockstar	★	23
Alien Resurrection	Fox Interactive	★★★	38
All-Star Racing 2	Mud Duck	★★★	71
All-Star Slammin' D-ball	Agetec	★★½	56
Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	★★★★	47
Alundra	Working Designs	★★★★½	4
Alundra 2	Activision	★★★	32
The Amazing Virtual Sea-Monkeys	Conspiracy	★½	66
American Pool	Mud Duck	★	71
Animaniacs Ten Pin Alley	ASC	★★★	17
Animorphs: Shattered Reality	Infogrames	★★½	37
Ape Escape	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**22**
Apocalypse	Activision	★★★	16
Arc the Lad Collection	Working Designs	★★★★	52
Arcade Party Pak	Midway	★★★½	28
Arcade's Greatest Hits: Atari Collection 2	Midway	★★½	7
Arcade's Greatest Hits: Midway Collection 2	Midway	★★	4
Armored Core	Sony CEA	★★★½	3
Armored Core: Master of Arena	Agetec	★★½	31
Armorines: Project S.W.A.R.M.	Acclaim	½	35
Army Men 3D	**3DO**	★★★	**20**
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	★★★★	27
Army Men: Air Attack 2	3DO	★★★½	39
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	★½	47
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes	3DO	★★	32
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	★★½	40
Army Men: World War	3DO	★½	34
Army Men: World War - Final Front	3DO	★½	45
Army Men: World War - Land, Sea, Air	3DO	★½	39
Arthur! Ready to Race	The Learning Co.	★	42
Assault	Midway	★★★	15
Asteroids	**Activision**	★★★½	**16**
Atari Anniversary Edition Redux	Infogrames	★★	53
Atlantis: The Lost Empire	SCEA	★★★★	48
ATV: Quad Power Racing	Acclaim	★	39
Austin Powers Pinball	Gotham Games	★★	64
Auto Destruct	Electronic Arts	★★★	6
Azure Dreams	Konami	★★★	10
Backstreet Billiards	Ascii	★★★½	15
Ball Breakers	Take 2	★★★½	36
Ballistic	Infogrames	★★★★	27
Baseball 2000	Interplay	★★	21
Bass Landing	Agetec	★★★½	26
Bass Rise	Bandai	★★★	28
Batman & Robin	Acclaim	★	13
Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker	Ubi Soft	½	39
Batman: Gotham City Racer	Ubi Soft	★½	46
Battle Hunter	Agetec	★½	48
Battletanx: Global Assault	3DO	★½	31
Beast Wars	Hasbro	★½	5
Beyblade	Crave	★½	66
Big Air	Accolade	★½	20
Big Bass Fishing	Take 2	½	58
Big Ol' Bass 2	Konami	★★½	45
Big Strike Bowling	Gotham Games	★★★½	68
Billiards	Agetec	★★½	45
Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.	Midway	★★	10

War! What is it good for?
Some good games, actually.

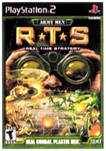
TWISTED MONSTERS
War of the Monsters was developed by the same folks who made the *Twisted Metal* series.

ESSENTIAL WAR GAMES

Like the look of Rising Sun? Here are more games to get your adrenaline pumping

Army Men RTS

★★★★ **MSRP:** $19.99

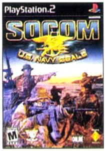


Without a shadow of doubt, the finest of all the *Army Men* games, *RTS* (for real-time strategy), has more in common with the superior PC games (also real-time-strategy games) than it does with the poor-quality 3D action games that previously sullied PS1 and PS2. The simple control scheme and effective campaign structure make the game (developed by Pandemic, which is now building the awesome *Full Spectrum Warrior* on Xbox for THQ) an unusual break from the norm on PS2. It's still one of the best games of its genre, which isn't something we say about an *Army Men* product too often!

QUICK TIP To give yourself supersoldiers, hold R2 and press □ twice, ⊗, △, ⊗, and then □ while playing the game.

SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs

★★★★★ **MSRP:** $59.99

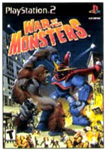


SOCOM, one of the best squad-based combat games ever made, is the best reason to get online with your PS2. Sure, the single-player game is good and has the fancy voice-recognition gimmick, but the real deal is playing in a 16-player game online, barking instructions into a microphone, and generally being a badass. We love this game, and even though the sequel's coming, you should indulge *now*.

QUICK TIP Beat the single-player game on Ensign difficulty to unlock the terrorist weapons in the armory. Beat the game on Lieutenant difficulty to unlock the MGL (Multiple Grenade Launcher).

War of the Monsters

★★★★★ **MSRP:** $39.99

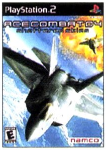


Humongous monsters beating the crap out of each other with buildings. What could be better? Perhaps the same monsters beating seven shades of crap out of each other with traffic? Or aircraft? Or other monsters? *War of the Monsters* is best enjoyed as a two-player game, and you can make the huge battles last for hours if you're a competent player. This was something of a cult hit...but believe us, it's one of the best.

QUICK TIP Use a memory card with a saved file from *Twisted Metal: Black* with Minion unlocked. If done correctly, you'll be told that Mecha Sweet Tooth is unlocked. Select Agamo and choose costume No. 4.

Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies

★★★★½ **MSRP:** $19.99

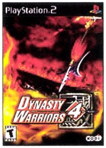


Possibly the best flight-combat game on PS2, although that's not saying much given that the genre is hardly overrepresented. Namco's game is fast-paced, gorgeous, and woven together with a loose story that at least puts your dogfighting and bombing into some kind of context. With 18 missions and loads of planes to work with, you certainly get your money's worth. And it's cheap, too!

QUICK TIP The game is actually fairly light on cheats, but if you successfully beat all 18 missions and then save the game, you'll unlock a bunch of new modes, including Special Continue, which allows you to replay the game with new fighters and weapons, as well as all your cash.

Dynasty Warriors 4

★★★★½ **MSRP:** $49.99

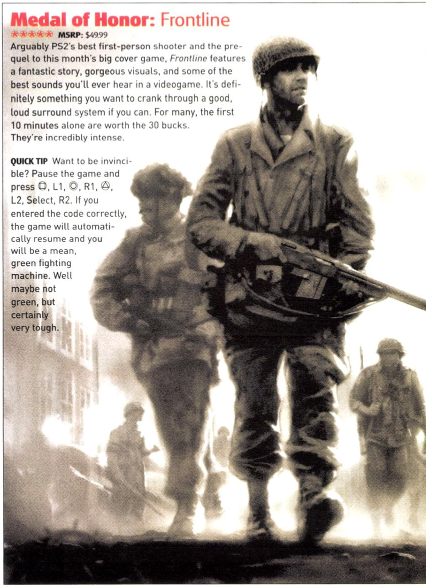


The ultimate melee combat system gets refined to its ultimate form in the latest version of Koei's fighter. Hack and slash your way through 100 years of conflict in China leading up to the reunification of the country under the Jin dynasty. As in previous *Dynasty Warriors* titles, there are actually lots of tactical elements to the game, so it's not just cruising around in a silly-looking hat, hitting people very hard with the business end of a big pointy stick. Our man Chris Baker loves these things and assures us that if you like the idea of wars and feuds in ancient China, you'll love this stuff.

QUICK TIP To quickly get up after being knocked down or knocked off a horse, press L1 to flip up and get ready to attack or guard. This also works well when fighting in duels.

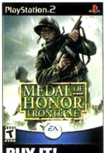
Medal of Honor: Frontline

★★★★★ **MSRP:** $49.99



Arguably PS2's best first-person shooter and the prequel to this month's big cover game, *Frontline* features a fantastic story, gorgeous visuals, and some of the best sounds you'll ever hear in a videogame. It's definitely something you want to crank through a good, loud surround system if you can. For many, the first 10 minutes alone are worth the 30 bucks. They're incredibly intense.

QUICK TIP Want to be invincible? Pause the game and press □, L1, ○, R1, △, L2, Select, R2. If you entered the code correctly, the game will automatically resume and you will be a mean, green fighting machine. Well maybe not green, but certainly very tough.



BUY IT!
One of the finest
Shop around and you'll find it cheap. Don't miss out—it's a classic.

Do you agree with our Essential War Games list? Write us at opm@ziffdavis.com and title the e-mail *Replay: War.*

100,000,000 The number of PS1s in people's homes around the world.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Black Bass with Blue Marlin	Hot-B	★★	29
Blade	Activision	★★½	41
Blast Lacrosse	Acclaim	★★½	48
Blast Radius	Psygnosis	★★★½	19
Blaster Master: Blasting Again	Crave	★★★	38
Blasto	Sony CEA	★★★½	8
Blockids	Natsume	★★½	69
Bloody Roar	Sony CEA	★★★½	6
Bloody Roar 2	Sony CEA	★★★★	21
Blues Big Musical	THQ	★★★	46
Board Game: Top Shop	Agetec	★★★★	45
Bomberman Fantasy Race	Atlus	★★½	19
Bomberman Party Edition	Vatical	★★½	38
Bomberman World	Atlus	★★½	13
The Bombing Islands	Kemco	★★½	47
Boombots	SouthPeak	★★½	27
Bottom of the 9th '97	Konami	★★★½	1
Bowling	Agetec	★★	43
Boxing	Agetec	★★★	45
Bratz	Ubi Soft	n/a	n/a
Brave Fencer Musashi	Square EA	★★★★	15
Bravo Air Race	THQ	★★★	1
Breakout	Hasbro	★★	39
Breath of Fire III	Capcom	★★★½	9
Breath of Fire IV	Capcom	★★★½	40
Brigandine	Atlus	★★★½	15
Broken Sword	THQ	★★★★	5
Broken Sword II	Crave	★★★½	27
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling	THQ	★★★½	13
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling 2	THQ	★★★★	31
Bug Riders	GT Interactive	★★	3
Bugs Bunny & Taz: Time Busters	Infogrames	★★★	41
Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time	Infogrames	★★★½	23
Builder's Block	Jaleco	★★★½	35
Burstrick Wake Boarding!!	Natsume	★½	45
Bushido Blade 2	Square EA	★★★½	14
Bust A Groove	989 Studios	★★★★	16
Bust A Groove 2	Enix	★★★	36
Bust-A-Move 4	Natsume	★★★★	17
Bust-A-Move 99	Acclaim	★★	19
Buzz Lightyear of Star Command	Activision	★★½	39
C: The Contra Adventure	Konami	★½	12
c-12: Final Resistance	Sony CEA	★★½	58
Caesar's Palace 2000	Interplay	½	41
Caesar's Palace II	Interplay	★★	15
Capcom vs. SNK Pro	Capcom	★★★½	60
Card Games	Agetec	★½	50
Cardinal SYN	Sony CEA	★★★	9
CART World Series	Sony CEA	★★★½	3
Casper: Friends Around the World	Sound Source	★½	41
Castlevania Chronicles	Konami	★★★½	50
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	**Konami**	★★★★★	**2**
Castrol Honda Superbike	Electronic Arts	★★	21
Centipede	Hasbro	★	22
Championship Bass	EA Sports	★★★★	33
Championship Motocross 2001 Feat. Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★	41
Championship Motocross Feat. Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★½	25
Championship Surfer	Mattel	★★★	41
Chessmaster II	Mindscape	★★★½	23
Chicken Run	Eidos	★★★	41
Chocobo Racing	Square EA	★★★	23
Chocobo's Dungeon 2	Square EA	★★½	29
Chrono Cross	**Square EA**	★★★★★	**36**
Circuit Breakers	Mindscape	★★★	12
Civilization II	Activision	★★★★½	18
Cleopatra's Fortune	Mud Duck	★★½	71
Clock Tower	Ascii	★★★	2
Clock Tower II: The Struggle Within	Agetec	★★½	28
Colin McRae 2.0	**Codemasters**	★★★★★	**40**
Colin McRae Rally	Sony CEA	★★★★	30
Colony Wars	**Psygnosis**	★★★★★	**4**
Colony Wars: Red Sun	Psygnosis	★★★★½	31
Colony Wars: Vengeance	Psygnosis	★★★½	14
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	Virgin	★★★½	4

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Contender	Sony CEA	★★★★	17
Contender 2	Bam	★	41
Cool Boarders 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**3**
Cool Boarders 3	**989 Studios**	★★★	**14**
Cool Boarders 4	**989 Studios**	★★★	**27**
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	★	39
Countdown Vampires	Bandai	★½	32
Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn	Activision	★★½	34
Crash Bandicoot 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**3**
Crash Bandicoot: WARPED	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**15**
Crash Bash	SCEA/Universal	★★½	39
Crime Killer	Interplay	★★★	12
Critical Depth	GT Interactive	★★★	3
Croc	**Fox Interactive**	★★★★	**1**
Croc 2	Fox Interactive	★★½	22
Crossroad Crisis	Agetec	★½	50
Crusaders of Might & Magic	3DO	★★★	30
CTR: Crash Team Racing	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**26**
CyberTiger	EA Sports	★★★★	27
Dance Dance Revolution	Konami	★★★★	42
Dance Dance Revolution: Disney Mix	Konami	★★★★	49
Dance Dance Revolution: Konamix	Konami	★★★★	57
Danger Girl	THQ	★★½	39
Dark Omen	Electronic Arts	★★	9
DarkStalkers 3	Capcom	★★★★	16
Darkstone	Take 2	★★★½	43
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	Acclaim	★★★½	38
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix	Acclaim	★★½	47
David Beckham Soccer	Majesco	★★★	61
Dead in the Water	ASC	★★½	17
Dead or Alive	Tecmo	★★★★½	8
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos	★★½	9
Deception III: Dark Delusion	Tecmo	★★★★	31
Delta Force: Urban Warfare	Novalogic	★★★	61
Demolition Racer	Infogrames	★★★★	26
Destrega	Koei	★★★★	16
Destruction Derby Raw	Midway	★★★★	39
Devil Dice	THQ	★★★½	13
Dexter's Laboratory: Mandark's Lab?	Bam	★★★½	59
Diablo	Electronic Arts	★★★★	8
Die Hard Trilogy: Viva Las Vegas	Fox Interactive	★★	31
Digimon Digital Card Battle	Bandai	★★★	48
Digimon Rumble Arena	Bandai	★★★½	55
Digimon World	Bandai	★½	36
Digimon World 2	Bandai	★★	46
Digimon World 3	Bandai	★★½	57
Dino Crisis	Capcom	★★★★	25
Dino Crisis 2	Capcom	★★★★½	38
Dirt Jockey	Mastiff	★★	71
Disney's Dinosaur	Ubi Soft	★½	36
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	★★½	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubi Soft	★★★	39
Downhill Mountain Bike Racing	Activision	★★½	27
Dracula: The Last Sanctuary	DreamCatcher	★★½	56
Dracula: The Resurrection	DreamCatcher	★★½	48
Dragon Ball GT	Bandai	★★	4
❷ **Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 22**	**Infogrames**	★	**69**

Ultimate battle, my ass. Here's your stinking code.

UNLOCK BONUS CHARACTERS

At the Title screen, press the following: ↑, △, ↓, ✕, ←, L1, →, R1

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Dragon Tales: Dragon Seek	NewKidCo	★½	45
Dragon Valor	Namco	★★★	38
Dragon Warrior VII	Enix	★★★★½	51
Dragonseeds	Jaleco	★★	15
Driver	**GT Interactive**	★★★★	**24**
Driver 2	Infogrames	★★★★	40
Ducati World Championship Racing	Acclaim	★★½	41
Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes	Infogrames	★★½	40
Duke Nukem: Time to Kill	**GT Interactive**	★★★½	**14**
Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown	GT Interactive	★★★	5
Dukes of Hazzard	**SouthPeak**	★½	**29**
Dukes of Hazzard II: Daisy Dukes it Out	SouthPeak	★★	41
Dune 2000	Electronic Arts	★½	27
EA Sports Supercross	EA Sports	★★★½	41

REPLAY FORUM

SOCOM: 256-ROUND GAME

1. Host a game.
2. Put only one map in the map list.
3. Get everyone on both teams to select Ready (except you).
4. Hit Eject on your PS2.
5. Immediately go into the Armory.
6. Push the Eject button again to put the disc back in.
7. Click the Return to Lobby button.
8. Wait 7 to 10 seconds and select Ready (while the game disc is still clicking inside your PS2).
9. Your screen will go black.
10. After the 7 to 10 seconds, hold down the Reset button on your PS2.
11. Reset your PS2 and log on again.
12. Join the game you just left.
13. The score will be 193 to 0 in favor of the team you first started on.

StEaLtH mUnKeY
koopstra87
@hotmail.com

SPLINTER CELL: NO GUTS, NO GLORY

I was just playing *Splinter Cell*; I've had it for a while, but I never noticed the rating on the back that says the game has blood and gore. I don't see any blood or anything even when I shoot someone. Is there an option or a cheat in which I can turn blood and gore on and off or is something wrong with my copy of the game?

Monkey Man
chechegetdayayoe
@msn.com

There is no blood cheat in *Splinter Cell*, and there are no cheat codes for the game *at all!*

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Eagle One: Harrier Attack	Infogrames	★★★	32
Echo Night	Agetec	★★★	23
ECW Anarchy Rulz	Acclaim	★	38
ECW Hardcore Revolution	Acclaim	★½	30
Ehrgeiz	Square EA	★★★½	21
Einhänder	Sony CEA	★★★★	8
Elemental Gearbolt	Working Designs	★★★★	11
Eliminator	Psygnosis	★½	20
The Emperor's New Groove	SCEA	★★★½	40
Equestrian Showcase	Mud Duck	★★	71
ESPN MLS GameNight	Konami	★★★	40
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial: Interplanetary Mission	NewKidCo	½	54
Eternal Eyes	Crave	★½	38
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	THQ	★★½	41
Evil Zone	Titus	★★★	25
Expendable	Infogrames	★½	34
F1 2000	EA Sports	★★★½	33
F1 Championship Season	EA Sports	★★★½	40
F1 Racing Championship	Ubi Soft	★★½	39
Family Feud	Hasbro	★★★	39
Family Game Pack	3DO	★★½	33
Fantastic Four	Acclaim	★★	3
Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition	SNK	★½	30
Fear Effect	Eidos	★★★★½	31
Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix	Eidos	★★★★½	43
Felony 11-79	Ascii	★★★	1
FIFA 98	EA Sports	★★★½	4
FIFA 99	EA Sports	★★★★½	17
FIFA 2000	EA Sports	★★★★½	27
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	★★★★½	39
FIFA Soccer 2003	EA Sports	★★★½	63
The Fifth Element	Activision	½	15
Fighter Maker	Agetec	★★★½	21
Fighting Force	**Eidos**	★★★	**3**
Fighting Force 2	Eidos	★★	29
Final Fantasy Anthology	Square EA	★★★★½	26
Final Fantasy Chronicles	Square EA	★★★★	47
❶ **Final Fantasy Origins**	**Square Enix**	★★★½	**67**

Wanna build up your hit points real quick in Final Fantasy II? Wander around outside a town, get into random battles with easy enemies, then attack your own characters. The more HP you lose, the greater chance you'll be given an HP boost in return.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Final Fantasy Tactics	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**5**
❹ **Final Fantasy VII**	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**1**

Wow, talk about a blast from the past. Well, you ask, we provide.

FLOG THAT CHICKEN To speed up your Chocobo during a Chocobo race, hold L1, L2, R1, and R2. To recharge its stamina, hold R1 and R2.

MMM, SPINY! To race a Cactuar in the Snowboarding minigame in Gold Saucer, first qualify for each course. Then you'll see a yellow balloon that will let you race in Time Attack mode. Race on the Beginner course, and look for a silver balloon. Grab it, then beat the course in less than 54 seconds. Then go into Time Attack mode again, hit Start, go to Options, and select Ghost. The final menu item ("???") is a Cactuar ghost.

REVIVE AERIS You CAN'T. Stop asking.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Final Fantasy VIII	**Square EA**	★★★★★	**25**
Final Fantasy IX	**Square EA**	★★★★★	**39**
Fisherman's Bait	Konami	★★★½	18
Fisherman's Bait 2: Big Ol' Bass	Konami	★★★	27
Flintstones Bedrock Bowling	SouthPeak	★	37
Ford Racing	Empire	★★½	44
Formula 1 '98	**Psygnosis**	★★★★	**15**
Formula 1 '99	Psygnosis	★★★½	28
Forsaken	Acclaim	★★★★	10
Fox Sports Golf '99	Fox Interactive	★★	11
Fox Sports Soccer '99	Fox Interactive	★★½	11
Freestyle Boardin' '99	Capcom	★★½	18
Freestyle Motocross: McGrath vs. Pastrana	Acclaim	★★½	40
Frogger	**Hasbro**	★★½	**4**
Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge	Hasbro	★★★	38
Front Mission 3	Square EA	★★★★½	31
Future Cop L.A.P.D.	Electronic Arts	★★★	13
G-Police	Psygnosis	★★★★½	3
G-Police 2	Psygnosis	★★★★	25

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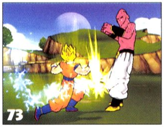
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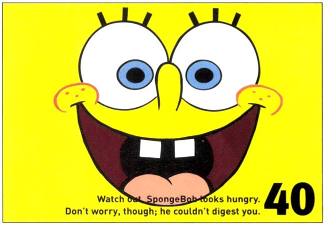
PRESS START
CONTROLLER 2
CRASH!!
70

December 7, 1941: A day that will live in your PS2. 78


Watch out. SpongeBob looks hungry. Don't worry, though; he couldn't digest you. 40

The sun also rises over *Medal of Honor*. Find out what happened in the other half of The Big One.

PlayStation
MEDAL OF HONOR
RISING SUN

REGULAR BITS

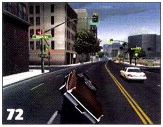
13 DEMO DISC
What other mag lets you get your hands on PS2 games before they're released?

16 INPUT
You send us letters, we print your letters. Because we care. Here's the address: opm@ziffdavis.com

24 SPIN
Untouchable franchises, Bob Burnquist, Jennifer Garner, plus a map of game makers nationwide.

102 REPLAY
A whopping 18 pages of tricks, strategies, and archived reviews. You bought it, we've got it covered.

120 P.S.
We bring you the P.S.A.T. to end all P.S.A.T.s, celebrating *OPM*'s sixth anniversary.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67 Broken Sword: Sleeping Dragon
67 Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds
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67 Culdcept
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75 ESPN NHL Hockey
66 EverQuest Frontiers
73 Fantasy Zone
63 The Fast and the Furious
66 Final Fantasy X-2
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75 NCAA GameBreaker 2004
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74 NFL GameDay 2004
74 NHL 2004
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75 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004
72 True Crime
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Three franchises that will never die—no matter how much the games might suck.

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This fierce fireball of rap makes her entry into the world of videogames with a voice role in *XIII*.

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OPM's handy monthly calendar.

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Pandora Tomorrow isn't the only fine-looking Clancy game headed for the PS2. Check out these others.

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Looking for a job in the videogame industry? Here's a good place to start.

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Seven things you should know about the new SpongeBob game.

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We sit down with Bob Burnquist to talk about the *THUG* life.

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What makes *Beyond Good & Evil* so special? Find out here.

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Bond characters get in the game.

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Rock on with the sweet sounds of *Madden NFL 2004*.

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REPLAY

103 .hack//MUTATION

104 Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness

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Make the most of Dynasty mode.

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Moves lists for this month's demo.

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Five bosses, five puzzles.

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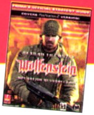
116 Midnight Club 2

118 Silent Line: Armored Core

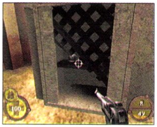


THANKS, PRIMA!
The information in this guide comes to you courtesy of the fine folks at Prima. Visit them at **www.primagames.com**.

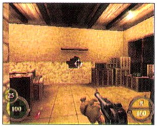
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: OPERATION RESURRECTION

Where to find every secret in the first mission

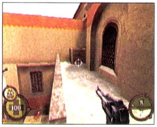
Finding secrets isn't just a casual pastime in *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*. For every secret you find, you get points that you can trade in at the end of any level for crucial upgrades. Here's how to get a head start.



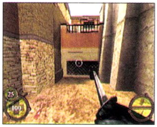
RAS EL-HADID 1 This one's not too hard to find, considering the game points you directly at it. Hit R2 to kick the lattice and you'll get a Luger and a Helmet.



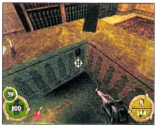
RAS EL-HADID 2 This board in the supply room (look for the crates) can be broken to reveal a gold bar. Don't worry, they get harder to find soon enough.



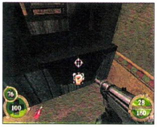
RAS EL-HADID 3 Climb up onto the balcony where you nailed the sniper and break the crate at the far end to get yourself some treasure goodness.



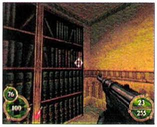
INNER CITY 1 In front of the radio room, you'll find an alley. At the end of the alley is another lattice. Kick it open and you'll find a Grenade Bag and First Aid Kit.



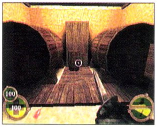
INNER CITY 2 Behind the counter in the house where you hear music playing is a small red button. Press it, and a wall opens to the left, revealing two Gold Bars.



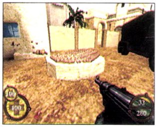
INNER CITY 3 In the supply room you come to after picking up the MP40, there's a hollow shelf in the back left corner with a hidden stash of 7.92mm rounds.



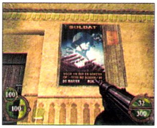
INNER CITY 4 Shortly before the end of the level is a bookcase. On the case's right side, a book is sticking out. Press it, and the bookcase opens, revealing a Flak Jacket.



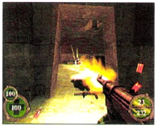
HEADQUARTERS 1 Between the two large kegs in the wine cellar near the start of the level is a barrel. Break it to get a bottle of Latour and a clip of 7.92mm rounds.



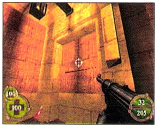
HEADQUARTERS 2 Look for a covered well in the courtyard. Kick open the cover and hop down the well. At the bottom is a pair of Gold Bars.



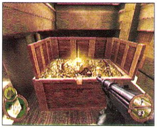
HEADQUARTERS 3 In the room with the note from Helga, slide the poster on the wall to expose a switch. Press the switch and you'll find two Gold Bars.



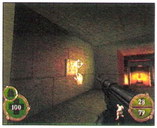
ANCIENT RUINS 1 Walk to the left of the large obelisk, walk down the hall, and shoot the gas barrel next to the soldier. It'll break open the wall, exposing a Chalice.



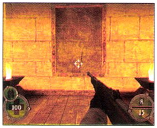
ANCIENT RUINS 2 Inside the temple at the top of the ramp, you'll notice a wall with cracks in it. Fire a few shots to bring down the wall and you'll get a Gold Bar.



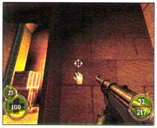
BURIAL CHAMBER 1 Climb the scaffold to the left in the first room and you'll find a Gold Bar sitting in an open crate. Don't expect the rest to be this easy.



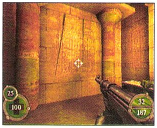
BURIAL CHAMBER 2 In the huge room at the end of the level, climb the ladder and find the sniper's roost. There's a switch that opens a door to a Gold Bar.



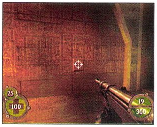
BURIAL CHAMBER 3 Follow the U-shaped hall out of the huge room to find another secret area. Break the wall between the flames and you'll find a Pharaoh Bust.



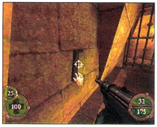
BURIED ALIVE 1 In the obelisk room (after the stairway trap), two walls contain darker bricks. Hit these bricks to open a secret area, revealing a Pharaoh Bust.



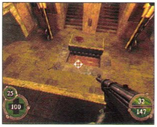
BURIED ALIVE 2 After the Nazis close the gate, a short flight of stairs stops at a small landing. Before continuing up, smash the wall to the left to reveal a Gold Bar.



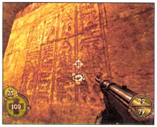
BURIED ALIVE 3 On the right wall of the room containing three sarcophagi is a switch. Activate it to open a door, revealing a room with two Gold Bars.



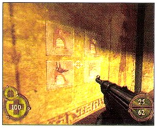
EYE OF ANUBIS 1 At the end of a dead-end hallway near the start of this level, you'll find an odd-looking switch on the wall. Activate it to open a secret area.



EYE OF ANUBIS 2 In the room with the two statues, head to the middle of the upper walkway and hit the switch. The sarcophagus will reveal some Gold Bars.



EYE OF ANUBIS 3 Near the bottom of the square stairwell is a wall covered with hieroglyphics. Break it to reveal a secret area and some treasure.



EYE OF ANUBIS 4 At the top of the stairs is a short hall with pictures on the wall. Press them in this order: Lion, Pharaoh, Dog, Bird. Turn around for your prize.

Next month, we'll give you multiplayer strategy. Oh, wait, no we won't, because there's NO MULTIPLAYER in the game.

ANCIENT HISTORY

Return to Castle Wolfenstein traces its roots way back to 1981's *Castle Wolfenstein* by Muse Software.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
G-Darius	THQ	●●●●	13
Galaga: Destination Earth	Hasbro	●●◐	39
Galerians	Crave	●●●	33
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	●●◐	28
Gauntlet Legends	Midway	●●◐	32
Gekido	Interplay	●●●	34
Gekioh: Shooting King	Natsume	●●●◐	67
Gex: Deep Cover Gecko	Eidos	●●●◐	20
Gex: Enter the Gecko	Midway	●●●◐	7
Ghost in the Shell	THQ	●●●●	4
Glover	Hasbro	●●	28
Gold and Glory: The Road to El Dorado	Sony CEA	●●	42
Gran Turismo	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**9**
Gran Turismo 2	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**29**
Grand Theft Auto	**Take 2**	●●◐	**10**
Grand Theft Auto 2	Rockstar	●●●	27
Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Rockstar	●●◐	22
Grand Tour Racing '98	Activision	●●●	1
Grandia	Sony CEA	●●●●◐	26
Granstream Saga	THQ	●●●	10
The Grinch	Konami/Universal	●◐	39
Grind Session	Sony CEA	●●●●	34
Grudge Warriors	Take 2	●●	34
Guardian's Crusade	Activision	●●●	19
Gubble	Mud Duck	◐	68
Gundam Battle Assault 2	Bandai	●●●●	62
Gunfighter: The Legend of Jesse James	Ubi Soft	●●◐	52
HardBall '99	Accolade	●◐	15
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	●●●	53
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	●●●	64
Harvest Moon: Back to Nature	Natsume	●●●◐	40
HBO Boxing	Acclaim	●●	41
Heart of Darkness	Interplay	●●●●	13
Hello Kitty's Cube Frenzy	NewKidCo	●●◐	20
Herc's Adventures	LucasArts	●●●	2
High Heat Baseball 2000	3DO	●	22
High Heat Major League Baseball 2002	3DO	●●●●	43
Hogs of War	Infogrames	●●●●	38
Hooters Road Trip	Ubi Soft	◐	55
Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth	Atlus	●●◐	53
Hot Shots Golf	Sony CEA	●●●●	7
Hot Shots Golf 2	Sony CEA	●●●◐	30
Hot Wheels Turbo Racing	**Electronic Arts**	●●◐	**25**
Hydro Thunder	Midway	●●	31
IHRA Drag Racing	Bethesda	◐	53
In Cold Blood	DreamCatcher	●●	49
Incredible Crisis	Titus	●●●◐	38
Inspector Gadget: Gadget's Crazy Maze	Ubi Soft	●●●◐	50
Intelligent Qube	Sony CEA	●●●	2
Intellivision Classic Games	Activision	●◐	28
Int'l. Superstar Soccer 98	Konami	●●●●◐	11
Int'l. Track & Field 2000	Konami	●●●●	27
❸ **InuYasha**	**Bandai**	●●●	**68**

UNLOCK ALL CHARACTERS (except Totosai)

↑, →, ↓, ←, ↑, →, ↓, ←

UNLOCK TOTOSAI

↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, ←, →, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →

UNLOCK DEMON INUYASHA

↑, ↑, L1, L1, ↓, ↓, R1, R1

Invasion From Beyond	GT Interactive	●●	19
Iron Soldier 3	Vatical	●●●●	35
Irritating Stick	Jaleco	●●●	18
ISS Pro Evolution	Konami	●●●●◐	35
The Italian Job	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**57**
Jackie Chan Stuntmaster	Midway	●●●◐	30
Jade Cocoon	Crave	●●●◐	23
Jarrett & LaBonte Stock Car Racing	Codemasters	●●●●	38
Jeopardy!	Hasbro	●●●●	17
Jeopardy! 2	Hasbro	●●●●	29
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000	**Acclaim**	●◐	**38**
Jersey Devil	Sony CEA	●●	10
Jet Moto 2	**Sony CEA**	●●●◐	**3**
Jet Moto 3	989 Studios	●●●◐	26
Jigsaw Madness	XS Games	●●	70

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Jimmy Johnson VR Football	Interplay	●●	2
Jojo's Bizarre Adventure	Capcom	●●●●◐	31
Juggernaut	Jaleco	●●	26
K-1 Grand Prix	Jaleco	●●●◐	28
K-1 Revenge	Jaleco	●●◐	18
Kagero: Deception II	Tecmo	●●●●◐	14
Kartia	Atlus	●●●●	12
Kensei Sacred Fist	Konami	●◐	17
Kickboxing	Agetec	●	58
Killer Loop	Crave	●●●	27
King of Fighters 99	Agetec	●●●●	41
KISS Pinball	Take 2	●◐	46
Klonoa	**Namco**	●●●●●	**6**
Knockout Kings	EA Sports	●●●◐	16
Knockout Kings 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	27
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	39
Konami Arcade Classics	Konami	●●◐	23
Koudelka	Infogrames	●●●	35
Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed	Midway	●●●	34
The Land Before Time: Great Valley Racing	TDK Mediactive	●●●	46
The Land Before Time: Return to Great Valley	Sound Source	●●◐	39
Largo Winch .//Commando Sar	Ubi Soft	◐	57
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver	**Eidos**	●●●●◐	**25**
The Legend of Dragoon	Sony CEA	●●●●◐	34
Legend of Legaia	Sony CEA	●●●●	19
Legend of Mana	Square EA	●●◐	35
Lego Island 2: The Brickster's Revenge	Lego Media	●●◐	46
Lego Rock Raiders	Lego Media	●	37
Lilo & Stitch	Sony CEA	●●●◐	59
The Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure	Activision	●◐	42
The Little Mermaid II	THQ	●●●●	39
Lode Runner	Natsume	●●◐	4
Looney Tunes Racing	Infogrames	●●◐	39
Looney Tunes: Sheep Raider	Infogrames	●●◐	51
The Lost World: Jurassic Park	**Electronic Arts**	●	**2**
Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete	Working Designs	●●●●◐	22
Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	Working Designs	●●●●	40
Madden NFL 98	**EA Sports**	●●●●	**2**
Madden NFL 99	EA Sports	●●●●◐	13
Madden NFL 2000	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**25**
Madden NFL 2001	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**37**
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	49
Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	●●●●	62
Marble Master	Conspiracy	●●◐	69
Martian Gothic: Unification	Take 2	●●●◐	52
Marvel Super Heroes	Capcom	●●	2
Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter	Capcom	●●●◐	18
Marvel vs. Capcom EX	Capcom	●●◐	30
Mary-Kate and Ashley: Magical Mystery Mall	Acclaim	●●●◐	40
Mary-Kate and Ashley: Winner's Circle	Acclaim	●●◐	45
Mass Destruction	ASC	●●◐	3
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	Activision	●●●●	45
Maximum Force	Midway	●◐	2
MDK	Playmates	●●◐	3
Medal Of Honor	**Electronic Arts**	●●●●	**27**
Medal Of Honor Underground	Electronic Arts	●●●●	39
MediEvil	Sony CEA	●●●●	14
MediEvil II	Sony CEA	●●●◐	32
Mega Man Legends	Capcom	●●●●	12
Mega Man Legends 2	Capcom	●●●◐	39
Mega Man X4	Capcom	●●●	4
Mega Man X5	Capcom	●●●◐	41
Mega Man X6	Capcom	●●●	53
Men in Black–The Series: Crashdown	Infogrames	●●●	54
Metal Gear Solid	**Konami**	●●●●●	**14**
Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions	Konami	●●●●	25
Metal Slug X	Agetec	●●●●	43
Micro Machines	**Midway**	●●●●●	**5**
Micro Maniacs	Codemasters	●●●●	32
Mike Tyson Boxing	Codemasters	●●	39
Miracle Space Race	Mud Duck	●	71
The Misadventures of Tron Bonne	Capcom	●●●●	31
Miss Spider's Tea Party	Simon & Schuster	●●●	41
Missile Command	Hasbro	●●●	28

REPLAY FORUM

GTA: VICE CITY–DRIVE ON BOATS

While I was playing *GTA: Vice City* the other day, I used the Cars on Water cheat. [That's Right, R2, d, R1, L2, b, R1, R2 –Ed.] As I glided across the water, I decided to ram some boats! After a few minutes of ramming fun, I headed straight for the back of a larger, fishing-like boat. I rode right up onto the back of the boat. I then realized that if you keep hitting the gas, you stay on the back of the boat—and if you turn the car right or left, it turns the boat the same direction! It is a very slow and wide turn, but it does turn! I tried this with quite a few different vehicles and it works with most.

Ryan Green
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That's great, Ryan. Now, why exactly would you want to drive a boat with a car in it?

KINGDOM HEARTS: FREE HEALING

I found an interesting little bug in *Kingdom Hearts* for the Olympus Colosseum levels. It's kinda hard to get the timing down right, but if you use a curative item right as the battle ends, just before the "Team Victory" screen where the members of your party do their little poses, it will cure you, but the item won't be taken out of your inventory. With proper timing, you can use an elixir after every fight and still have plenty to spare.

Chris Newswanger
verticality
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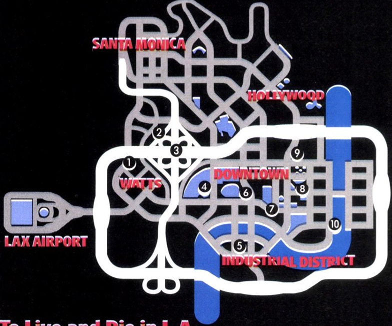
GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	●●	28
MK Mythologies	Midway	●●◐	3
MLB 98	Sony CEA	●●●	1
MLB 99	Sony CEA	●●●●	9
MLB 2000	989 Studios	●●●●	21
MLB 2001	989 Studios	●●●	33
MLB 2002	Sony CEA	●●	46
MLB 2003	Sony CEA	●●●●	60
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	●●●●◐	70
MLB Bottom of the 9th 99	Konami	●●●◐	12
Mobil 1: Rally Championship	Electronic Arts	●●●	32
Mobile Armor	Agetec	●	70
Mobile Light Force	XS Games	●●●◐	69
Monaco Grand Prix	Ubi Soft	●●●◐	21
Monkey Hero	Take 2	●●	18
Monkey Magic	Sunsoft	●	29
Monopoly	**Hasbro**	●●●	**5**
Monster Bass!	XS Games	●●	70
Monster Rancher 2	Tecmo	●●●●	26
Monster Rancher Battle Card: Episode II	Tecmo	●●●◐	36
Monster Rancher Hop-A-Bout	Tecmo	●●●◐	41
Monster Seed	Sunsoft	●●◐	20
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●◐	51
Mort the Chicken	Crave	●◐	41
Mortal Kombat: Special Forces	Midway	●◐	36
Mortal Kombat 4	**Midway**	●●●◐	**11**
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	Midway	n/a	n/a
Moto Racer	**Electronic Arts**	●●●●●	**3**
Moto Racer 2	Electronic Arts	●●●●◐	14
Moto Racer World Tour	Infogrames	●●●●	40
Motocross Mania	Take 2	●	48
Motorhead	Fox Interactive	●●●◐	14
Mr. Domino	Acclaim	●●●◐	15
Mr. Driller	Namco	●●●●	33
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	Namco	●●●●	38
MTV Music Generator	Codemasters	●●●●	28
MTV Sports: Pure Ride	THQ	●●●◐	39
MTV Sports: Skateboarding Feat. Andy MacDonald	THQ	●	39
MTV Sports: Snowboarding	THQ	●●●◐	27
MTV Sports: T.J. Lavin's Ultimate BMX	THQ	●●	45
The Mummy	Konami	●●●	41
Muppet Monster Adventure	Midway	●●●●	39
Muppet Race Mania	Midway	●●●◐	39
My Disney Kitchen	Bam	n/a	n/a
N.GEN Racing	Infogrames	●●◐	35
N20	Fox Interactive	●●	11
Nagano Winter Olympics 98	Konami	●●	6
❺ **Namco Museum Vol. 3**	**Namco**	**n/a**	**n/a**

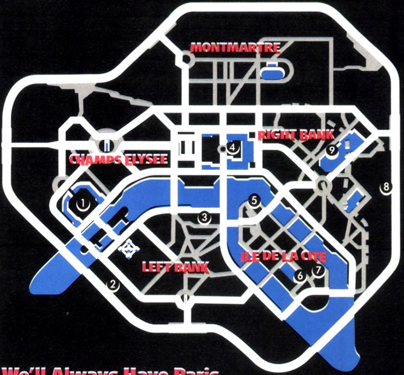
Did you know that Dig Dug is Mr. Driller's dad? Seriously, it's true!

NASCAR 98	**EA Sports**	●●●●	3
NASCAR 99	**EA Sports**	●●●●	**14**
NASCAR 2000	EA Sports	●●●●	26
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●◐	38
NASCAR Heat	Hasbro	●●●◐	40
NASCAR Rumble	Electronic Arts	●●●◐	31
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	●●	52
NBA Fastbreak 98	Midway	●●◐	4
NBA Hoopz	Midway	●●●	43
NBA In the Zone 98	Konami	●●◐	7
NBA In the Zone 99	Konami	●●●◐	19
NBA In the Zone 2000	Konami	●●◐	28
NBA Live 98	EA Sports	●●●●◐	3
NBA Live 99	EA Sports	●●●●	16
NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	●●●●◐	28
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	39
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	●●●◐	53
NBA ShootOut 98	Sony CEA	●●●◐	8
NBA ShootOut 2000	989 Studios	●●●	30
NBA ShootOut 2001	989 Studios	●●◐	39
NBA ShootOut 2002	Sony CEA	●●●◐	50
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	●●●◐	63
NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC	Midway	●●●	28
NBA Tonight	ESPN Digital	●●●	14
NCAA Final Four 99	989 Studios	●●●◐	18

MIDNIGHT CLUB II

Takin' it to the streets





To Live and Die in L.A.

Los Angeles is the high-speed bowl of *Midnight Club II*, at least compared to the cramped alleys of Paris and all-out insanity of Tokyo. Avoid the freeways if you can—getting on is easy, but finding an exit that'll take you where you want to go? Less easy.

① You'll learn this shortcut in the Takeoff Time race with Steven. Watch out for the metal spires and the junked car; they'll hurt ya.

② There are five jumps ringing the cloverleaf freeway junction. Don't try to take these jumps at less than full speed—or you may land on the freeway.

③ Heading northwest through the building at 4, hit a nitro as you near the ramp. If timed perfectly, you'll land on the ramp on the far side. Risky but stylish.

④ This building is a hotbed of shortcuts. There are three sets of glass doors you can bust through, depending on where you're coming from.

⑤ A ramp leads up to the rooftops, and from there you'll jump to a second ramp and back to street level. This east/west shortcut works both ways.

⑥ There's an east/west route here leading down a set of stairs and through a building (via the glass doors). You can also hit this after jumping the stairs at 8.

⑦ This route runs parallel to shortcut 6. Coming from the west, break through the doors and follow the tunnel through a few buildings until you wind up at 8.

⑧ Use the stairs as a jump and make for shortcut 6. Drive through the lower section to set up for 9. Or head under the stairs, make a sharp turn, and hit shortcut 7.

⑨ Drive through the glass doors here. Follow the route into a parking garage and then through an alley for a long, quick north/south bypass.

⑩ Ramps lead over the sluice gate if you're in the canals, while an equally narrow jump spans east/west across at street level—key in the last Dice race.

We'll take any of you on, and beat you.

We'll Always Have Paris

Paris is a mix of wide-open boulevards and tiny, cafe-infested alleyways barely wide enough to accommodate a single hell-for-leather driver, let alone half a dozen. Traffic is a bear, what with all the euro-econoboxes, but you'll also find some absolutely huge jumps and a complex network of catacombs in the bowels of the city. The French molemen gotta live somewhere, you know.

① There are multiple routes here; the most useful are the two ramps along the arms of the trocadero—use 'em to jump the Seine and reach the Eiffel Tower park.

② This narrow ramp won't necessarily save a ton of time, but at least you'll avoid the traffic. It'll come in handy in the Eiffel Visions race.

③ This ramp leads to a huge jump, which should help you clear the bridge traffic real quick-like. Is *tout sweet* the technical term?

④ There are three catacomb entrances here. Two ramps lead out of the Louvre courtyard and three more lead in. You can also use the pyramid as a jump.

⑤ Drive onto the barge at full tilt (a nitro may well be in order) and the jump at the end should send you clear across the river. This one will definitely come in handy.

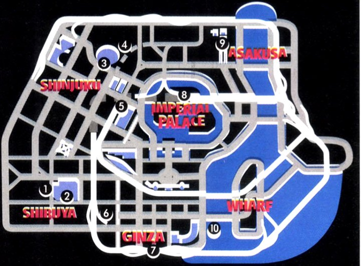
⑥ Those Notre Dame doors don't look very forgiving, but they'll open if you smack 'em. What's a little sacrilege added to the pile of laws you've already broken?

⑦ Jump off the barge, but be sure to line it up straight or you'll hit a wall. Done correctly, you'll enter a tunnel before popping up at street level.

⑧ Multiple branching rooftop pathways lead to big jumps here, including a southwest route that'll take you clear across the Seine...if you're moving at top speed.

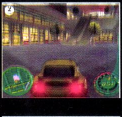
⑨ Take the ramp along the side of the building and you can follow two different rooftop paths. You'll encounter this shortcut first in Blog's Rooftop Vistas race.

The score we gave *Midnight Club II*.
Try playing online for even more fun.



Tokyo a-Go Go Go!

Tokyo is a nightmare of complex streets, narrow alleys, and open pedestrian areas littered with car-stopping public sculpture (damn you, attractive fountains and statuary!). The elevated train tracks spanning from the eastern edge of the map to Shinjuku are a good way to avoid traffic, and as a bonus, you can jump off at any moment. Just, uh, watch out for trains while you're up there.



❶ This network of narrow alleys and indoor hallways will save time and give you a few moments of respite from Sunday drivers.

❷ Bust through the doors of this Shibuya mall and hit those escalators at top speed. You should land right in an intersection.

❸ Heading west toward Shinjuku, there's a long route from an Imperial Palace tunnel to the far end of the map, ending with another huge jump.

❹ The pedestrian area here is full of little alleys and alternate routes you won't find on the map, and there's a network of tunnels below ground.

❺ This path works as a quick entrance/exit to the elevated train tracks. Make sure you have enough speed coming through the building to clear the low wall.

❻ There's quite a large network of elevated ramps and bridges in this area. Venture up here without knowing your way around and risk losing a lot of time.

❼ This alleyway shortcut through the heart of Ginza doesn't include any death-defying jumps, but it will save you a few crucial seconds.

❽ The western Asakusa area is crisscrossed by a network of tiny alleys, some even tighter than the back streets of Paris. If you know the way, these can be a real help.

❾ Take the ramp along the side of the building and you can follow two different rooftop paths. You'll first encounter the shortcut in Blog's Rooftop Vistas race.

❿ Drive through a warehouse area, bust a gate along the water, and hit the jump to reach the far wharf. If you're going too slow, you'll end up submerged.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NCAA Final Four 2000	989 Studios	★★★½	28
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	★★	40
NCAA Football 98	EA Sports	★★	2
NCAA Football 99	EA Sports	★★★★½	12
NCAA Football 2000	EA Sports	★★★★	25
NCAA Football 2001	EA Sports	★★★½	36
NCAA GameBreaker 98	Sony CEA	★★★★	4
NCAA GameBreaker 99	989 Studios	★★★★	15
NCAA GameBreaker 2000	989 Studios	★★★	25
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	★★½	37
NCAA March Madness 98	EA Sports	★★★★	7
NCAA March Madness 99	EA Sports	★★★	18
NCAA March Madness 2000	EA Sports	★★★★	29
NCAA March Madness 2001	EA Sports	★★	41
Nectaris: Military Madness	Jaleco	★★★★	17
Need for Speed III	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★	**8**
Need for Speed: High Stakes	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★½	**20**
Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed	Electronic Arts	★★★½	33
Need for Speed: V-Rally	Electronic Arts	★½	3
Need for Speed: V-Rally 2	Electronic Arts	★★★½	28
Newman/Haas Racing	Psygnosis	★★	7
The Next Tetris	Hasbro	★★★	24
NFL Blitz	**Midway**	★★★★★	**13**
NFL Blitz 2000	**Midway**	★★★★★	**24**
NFL Blitz 2001	Midway	★★★½	38
NFL GameDay 98	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**1**
NFL GameDay 99	989 Studios	★★★★	13
NFL GameDay 2000	989 Studios	★★★★	25
NFL GameDay 2001	989 Studios	★★½	37
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	★★	49
NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	★★★★	62
NFL Xtreme	989 Studios	★★	11
NFL Xtreme 2	989 Studios	★½	24
NHL 98	EA Sports	★★★★	2
NHL 99	EA Sports	★★★★½	15
NHL 2000	EA Sports	★★★★	26
NHL 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	38
NHL Blades of Steel 2000	Konami	★★	28
NHL Breakaway 98	Acclaim	★★★	2
NHL Championship 2000	Fox Interactive	★★★	27
NHL FaceOff 98	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**2**
NHL FaceOff 99	989 Studios	★★★★	14
NHL FaceOff 2000	989 Studios	★★★★	26
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	★★★★½	38
NHL Rock the Rink	Electronic Arts	★★★★	32
Nick Toons Racing	Infogrames	★★★	48
Nightmare Creatures	Activision	★★★½	3
Nightmare Creatures II	Konami	★★	33
Ninja: Shadow of Darkness	Eidos	★½	15
Nuclear Strike	Electronic Arts	★★★★½	3
O.D.T.	Psygnosis	★½	15
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	★★★★½	15
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	**GT Interactive**	★★★★	**1**
Omega Boost	Sony CEA	★★★★	25
One	ASC	★★★★	4
One Piece Mansion	Capcom	★½	50
Pac-Man World	**Namco**	★★★★½	**25**
Pandemonium! 2	Midway	★★★½	3
Panzer Front	Agetec	★★★½	51
PaRappa the Rapper	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**2**
Parasite Eve	**Square EA**	★★★★	**12**
Parasite Eve II	Square EA	★★★★½	37
Patriotic PInball	Gotham Games	★★½	70
Persona 2: Eternal Punishment	Atlus	★★★★	41
Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee Golf	Infogrames	★★★½	41
PGA Tour 98	EA Sports	★★★	3
Pinobee	Konami	★★	68
Pipe Dreams 3D	Empire Int.	★★	52
Pitfall 3D	Activision	★★	9
Planet of the Apes	Ubi Soft	★★★	63
Play With The Teletubbies	Knowledge Adv.	★★	36
Pocket Fighter	Capcom	★★★★	11
Point Blank	Namco	★★★½	6
Point Blank 2	Namco	★★★½	20

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Point Blank 3	Namco	★★★½	44
Polaris SnoCross	Vatical	★★½	38
Pong	Hasbro	★★★½	27
Pool Hustler	Activision	★★★★	15
Populous: The Beginning	Electronic Arts	★½	21
Porsche Challenge	Sony CEA	★★★½	1
Power Play Sports Trivia	Ubi Soft	★★	58
Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue	THQ	★½	40
Power Shovel	Acclaim	★★★	49
Power Soccer 2	Psygnosis	★★★	5
Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball	Infogrames	★★½	41
The Powerpuff Girls: Chemical X-Traction	Bam	★½	51
Poy Poy	Konami	★★★	3
Pro 18 World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	★★	19
Pro Pinball: Big Race USA	Empire	★★★½	37
Pro Pinball: Fantastic Journey	Empire	★★★½	37
Pro Pinball: Timeshock!	Take 2	★	10
Psybadek	Psygnosis	★★	15
Punky Skunk	Jaleco	★★★	6
Putter Golf	Agetec	½	53
Puzzle Star Sweep	Agetec	★★½	43
Puzznic	Mud Duck	★	71
Q-Bert	Hasbro	★★½	28
Quake II	Activision	★★★★	27
R-Type Delta	Agetec	★★★★½	23
R-Types	Ascii	★★★½	17
R4: Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	★★★★	20
Racing	Agetec	½	43
Rage Ball	Agetec	★½	68
Railroad Tycoon II	Take 2	★★★	30
Rainbow Six	Red Storm	★	27
Rally Cross 2	989 Studios	★★★½	15
Rampage	Midway	★★½	4
Rampage 2: Universal Tour	Midway	★	21
Rampage Through Time	Midway	★½	36
Ray Tracers	THQ	★★★	5
RayCrisis	Working Designs	★★★	38
Rayman 2: The Great Escape	Ubi Soft	★★★★	35
Rayman Brain Games	Ubi Soft	★★★	50
Rayman Rush	Ubi Soft	★★★	57
Razor Freestyle Scooter	Crave	★★★	41
RC de GO!	Acclaim	★★★★	40
RC Helicopter	Agetec	★½	68
RC Revenge	Acclaim	★★★½	37
RC Stunt Copter	Titus	★★★★	25
Re-Volt	Acclaim	★★	26
Ready 2 Rumble	**Midway**	★★★½	**27**
Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2	Midway	★★★	40
Red Asphalt	Interplay	★½	3
Reel Fishing	**Natsume**	★★★	**3**
Reel Fishing II	Natsume	★★	34
Resident Evil: Director's Cut	**Capcom**	★★★	**2**
Resident Evil 2	**Capcom**	★★★★★	**6**
Resident Evil 2: Dual Shock	**Capcom**	★★★★★	**13**
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	Capcom	★★★★½	27
Resident Evil: Survivor	Capcom	★½	38
Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure	Atlus	★★★	35
Rising Zan	Agetec	★★★★	24
Risk	Hasbro	★★★★	11
Rival Schools	Capcom	★★★★	14
Riven: The Sequel to Myst	**Acclaim**	★★★★★	**6**
Road Rash 3D	**Electronic Arts**	★★★	**11**
Road Rash: Jail Break	Electronic Arts	★★	30
Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots	Mattel	★★★	41
Rocket Power: Team Rocket Rescue	THQ	★½	51
Rogue Trip	GT Interactive	★★★½	14
Roll Away	Psygnosis	★★★★½	13
Rollcage	Psygnosis	★★★½	19
Rollcage Stage II	Psygnosis	★★★½	31
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VI	Koei	★★	30
Roswell Conspiracies: Aliens, Myths, & Legends	Red Storm	★	48
RPG Maker	Agetec	★★★★½	35
Rugrats: Totally Angelica	THQ	★★★½	48
Rugrats in Paris: The Movie	THQ	★★★	41

Hung like a prize-winning mech.

SILENT LINE: ARMORED CORE

Download these contest-winning mechs!

ON THE DISC

Wanna know what a prize-winning mech looks like? Back in issue 68, *OPM* and Agetec sponsored a contest to build the ultimate *Armored Core* robot. The winners, chosen by the folks at Agetec, nabbed a copy of *Silent Line*, along with a limited-edition *Armored Core* action figure and a spot on our demo disc. Download them from our disc right now!

BEST LOOKING – APOLLO

Contestant Name: Cliff Peer

Pilot Name: Cronus

Reason for winning: "The first thing we said when we saw this AC was that it resembled a stormtrooper—if a stormtrooper had green trim. This AC took the spot for Best Looking because all of the parts in some way flow with the color scheme of the AC, giving it a distinct look."

Head: CHD-Skyeye
Core: CCL-01-NER
Arms: MAL-Gale
Legs: MLM-mm/Order
Booster: CBT-Fleet
FCS: Vrex-ND-2
Generator: CGP-ROZ
Radiator: RIX-CR10
Inside: N/A
Extension: Mest-MX/Crow
Back Unit R: CRW-S50
Back Unit L: MRL-SS/Sphere
Arm R: MWG-SRF/60
Arm L: MLB-Moonlight
Optional Parts: OP-Intensify

BEST OVERALL – CRIMSON BANE

Contestant Name: Homer Dyer

Pilot Name: Homer Dyer

Reason for winning: "This AC had the whole package. It has good AP, offensive points, defensive points, and great mobility. It also has a very creative color scheme. The only drawback is that it's overweight. Still, if you keep it off the ground, it can be one of the best ACs to pilot. The AC was put through three random arena matches, and in all three, it had no problem taking out the opponents. It also fared well in the finals, when it was pit against another AC in that division."

Head: MHD-RE/005
Core: CCL-01-NER
Arms: MAM-SS/ALS
Legs: MLM-MX/066
Booster: CBT-Fleet
FCS: AOX-F/ST-6
Generator: CGP-ROZ
Radiator: RMR-SA44
Inside: N/A
Extension: N/A
Back Unit R: MWX-MX/String
Back Unit L: [checking on this one]
Arm R: MWG-Karasawa
Arm L: KWG-FL450
Optional Parts: OP-Intensify

HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP – NOMAD

Contestant Name: Ryan Hayes

Pilot Name: Xyian VII

Reason for winning: "When you first look at Nomad, a quote from one of the most intellectual shows on TV comes to mind: 'Beefcake! Beefcake!!' This is a behemoth of an AC. With its large arsenal, good defensive points, and great mobility, this AC took the cake and then ate it."

Head: MHD-MM/003
Core: MCH-MX/GRP
Arms: CAH-22-NIX
Legs: MLH-MX/Volar
Booster: MBT-OX/E9
FCS: AOX-F/ST-6
Generator: CGP-ROZ
Radiator: RGI-KD99
Inside: N/A
Extension: N/A
Back Unit R: MWC-LQ/35
Back Unit L: MWC-XP/75
Arm R: CWGG-GR-12
Arm L: MLB-Moonlight
Optional Parts: OP-Intensify

MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMP – PHOENIX

Contestant Name: Martin Rundle

Pilot Name: Zarduun

Reason for winning: "Phoenix is the middleweight champ, and you ask why? Well, for starters, this AC has an awesome combination of mobility, defense, and offense, along with a great amount of AP. To sum it all up, this AC is just perfect for the middleweight class, and it handles great. Not to mention that it looks pretty cool, too."

Head: CHD-Skyeye
Core: CCL-01-NER
Arms: CAM-11-SOL
Legs: MLM-SS/Orc
Booster: MBT-OX/E9
FCS: VREX-ST-12
Generator: KGP-ZSV
Radiator: RMR-Icicle
Inside: N/A
Extension: CWEM-R20
Back Unit R: MWM-S60/12
Back Unit L: CM-AD-10
Arm R: MWG-MG/1000
Arm L: MLB-Moonlight
Optional Parts: OP-S-SCR, OP-E/SCR, OP-S/Stab, OP-E/CND, OP-ECMP, OP-L-AXL, OP-M/AW

LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMP – SILENT LINE

Contestant Name: Daniel Fusniak

Pilot Name: Daniel

Reason for winning: "This AC took this category with ease because of two greatly combined attributes: great mobility and mighty firepower. The basic strategy with this AC is 'catch me if you can.' If you can catch this AC, good luck defeating him."

Head: MHD-MM/003
Core: CCL-01-NER
Arms: MAL-RE/REX
Legs: MLL-MX/Edge
Booster: MBT-NI/Marine
FCS: VREX-F/ND-8
Generator: KGP-ZSV
Radiator: RMR-SA44
Inside: N/A
Extension: KEEP-Malum
Back Unit R: CWM-S40-1
Back Unit L: MWC-OC/15
Arm R: MWG-SRF/60
Arm L: KLB-TLS/SOL
Optional Parts: OP-Intensify

WORST. GAME. EVER.

The lowest-scoring game ever in *OPM*?
Sabrina, the Teenage Witch: A Twitch in Time

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Runabout 2	Hot-B	★	36
Running Wild	989 Studios	★★	14
Rushdown	Electronic Arts	★★	19
Sabrina, Teenage Witch: A Twitch in Time!	Knowledge Adv.	½	45
SaGa Frontier	Sony CEA	★★★½	8
SaGa Frontier 2	Square EA	★★★½	29
Saiyuki: Journey West	Koei	★★★½	47
Saltwater Sportfishing	Agetec	★★½	52
Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001	3DO	★★	32
Sammy Sosa Softball Slam	3DO	★★	33
Samurai Shodown: Warrior's Rage	SNK	★½	36
Scooby-Doo and the Cyber Chase	THQ	★★	52
Scrabble	Hasbro	★★½	28
Sentinel Returns	Psygnosis	★★	11
Sesame Street Sports	NewKidCo	★★★½	54
Shadow Madness	Crave	★★½	19
Shadow Man	Acclaim	★½	27
Shadow Master	Psygnosis	★★★★	5
Shadow Tower	Agetec	½	28
Shanghai: True Valor	Sunsoft	★★★	20
Sheep	Empire	★★★	41
Shrek: Treasure Hunt	TDK Mediactive	n/a	n/a
Shipwreckers	Psygnosis	★★★	3
Shooter: Space Shot	Agetec	★★★½	48
Shooter: Starfighter Sanvein	Agetec	★★	43
Silent Bomber	Bandai	★★★★	30
Silent Hill	**Konami**	★★★★	**18**
Silhouette Mirage	Working Designs	★★★½	29
Sim Theme Park	Electronic Arts	★★½	33
The Simpsons Wrestling	Taito	★★	45
Skullmonkeys	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★★	**6**
Skydiving Extreme	Banpresto	★½	49
Sled Storm	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★	**24**
Small Soldiers	Electronic Arts	★½	15
Smurfs	Infogrames	★★★★	29
Smurf Racer	Infogrames	★★	45
Sno-Cross Championship Racing	Crave	★½	37
Snowboarding	Agetec	★★	43
Sol Divide	XS Games	★★★	68
Sorcerer's Maze	XS Games	★★★½	68
Soul of the Samurai	Konami	★½	24
South Park	Acclaim	★½	27
South Park: Chef's Luv Shack	Acclaim	★	28
South Park Rally	Acclaim	★½	29
Space Invaders	Activision	★★★	27
Spawn: The Eternal	Sony CEA	★★	4
Spec Ops: Covert Assault	Take 2	★	52
Spec Ops: Ranger Elite	Take 2	★	46
Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol	Take 2	★	34
Speed Punks	Sony CEA	★★★★½	32
Speed Racer	Jaleco	★★	8
Speedball 2100	Empire	★★½	40
Spider-Man	**Activision**	★★★★★	**37**
Spider-Man 2: Enter Electro	Activision	★★★½	50
Spin Jam	Take 2	★½	38
SpongeBob SquarePants	THQ	★★	51
Sports Car GT	Electronic Arts	★★½	21
Spyro the Dragon	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**13**
Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage!	**Sony CEA**	★★★★½	**27**
Spyro 3: Year of the Dragon	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**39**
Star Ocean: The 2nd Story	Sony CEA	★★★★½	22
Star Trek: Invasion	Activision	★★★★½	37
Star Wars Episode I: Jedi Power Battles	LucasArts	★★½	33
Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace	**LucasArts**	★★★	**25**
Star Wars Masters of Teräs Käsi	LucasArts	★★★	4
Star Wars Demolition	LucasArts	★★★½	41
Steel Reign	Sony CEA	★★★	2
Streak	GT Interactive	★★½	15
Street Fighter Alpha 3	**Capcom**	★★★★★	**21**
Street Fighter Collection	Capcom	★★★	4
Street Fighter Collection 2	Capcom	★★★	16
Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha	Capcom	★★★★	2
Street Fighter EX2 Plus	Capcom	★★★	33
Street Racquetball	Agetec	½	68

SYPHON A tube shaped like an inverted U used to force a liquid from a reservoir over a barrier higher than the reservoir and to a point below it.

FILTER A porous material through which liquid or gas is passed.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Street Sk8er	Electronic Arts	●●◐	19
Street Sk8er 2	Electronic Arts	●●●	32
Strider 2	Capcom	●●●◐	34
Striker Pro 2000	Infogrames	●●●●	33
Strikers 1945	Agetec	●●◐	44
Stuart Little 2	Sony CEA	●●◐	60
Suikoden II	Konami	●●●●	26
Super Bubble Pop	Jaleco	●	68
Super Shot Soccer	Tecmo	●●●◐	61
Superbike 2000	EA Sports	●◐	32
SuperCross 2000	EA Sports	●◐	29
SuperCross Circuit	989 Studios	●●●◐	28
Superstar Dance Club #1 Hits!!!	XS Games	●●◐	67
Surf Riders	Ubi Soft	●◐	35
Sydney 2000	Eidos	●●	38
Syphon Filter	**989 Studios**	●●●●	**18**
Syphon Filter 2	989 Studios	●●●◐	31
Syphon Filter 3	Sony CEA	●●●◐	52
T'ai Fu	Activision	●◐	19
T.R.A.G.	Sunsoft	●●●	20
Tactics Ogre	Atlus	●●●◐	12
Tail Concerto	Atlus	●●●◐	26
Tales of Destiny	Namco	●●●●	13
Tales of Destiny II	Namco	●●●◐	49
Tarzan	**Sony CEA**	●●●◐	**24**
Team Buddies	Midway	●●●◐	38
Team LOSI RC Racing	Fox Interactive	●●◐	13
Tekken 3	**Namco**	●●●●●	**9**
Tenchu	**Activision**	●●●●	**14**
Tenchu 2: Birth of the Stealth Assassins	Activision	●●●	37
Tennis	Agetec	●●	53
Tennis Arena	Ubi Soft	●●◐	4
Test Drive 4	**Accolade**	●●●◐	**3**
Test Drive 5	**Accolade**	●●●◐	**15**
Test Drive 6	Infogrames	●●●◐	27
Test Drive: Le Mans	Infogrames	●●◐	34
Test Drive: Off-Road 3	Infogrames	●●	26
Thousand Arms	Atlus	●●●●	26
Thrasher: Skate & Destroy	Rockstar	●●●◐	29
Threads of Fate	Square EA	●●●◐	35
Thunder Force V	Working Designs	●●●	13
Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf	EA Sports	●●●●	16
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	●●●◐	41
Tigger's Honey Hunt	NewKidCo	●●●●	41
Time Crisis: Project Titan	Namco	●●●	45
Tiny Tank	Sony CEA	●●	25
Tiny Toon Adventures: Plucky's Big Adventure	Conspiracy	●◐	50
Tiny Toons: The Great Beanstalk	NewKidCo	●●●●	18
TOCA 2	Activision	●●●●◐	27
Tom & Jerry in House Trap	Eidos	●●●	41
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	Red Storm	●●◐	45
Tomb Raider II	**Eidos**	●●●●◐	**4**
Tomb Raider III	**Eidos**	●●●◐	**16**
Tomb Raider: Chronicles	Eidos	●●◐	41
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation	Eidos	●●●●	29
Tomba!	Sony CEA	●●●●	11
Tomba! 2: The Evil Swine Return	Sony CEA	●●●●	29
Tomorrow Never Dies	**Electronic Arts**	●●●◐	**28**
Tonka Space Station	Hasbro	●●◐	41
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	**Activision**	●●●●◐	**26**
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	**Activision**	●●●●●	**38**
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	●●●●◐	51
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	●●●●	64
Toonenstein: Dare to Scare	Vatical	●●◐	29
Torneko: The Last Hope	Enix	●●	40
Toy Story 2	Activision	●●●	28
Toy Story Racer	Activision	●●●	44
Transformers: Beast Wars Transmetals	Bam	●	36
Trap Gunner	Atlus	●●◐	13
Treasures of the Deep	Namco	●●●●	1
Trickin' Snowboarder	Capcom	●◐	25
Triple Play '99	EA Sports	●●◐	9
Triple Play 2000	EA Sports	●●●●◐	20
Triple Play 2001	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**32**
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●◐	44
Turbo Prop Racing	Sony CEA	●●●	11
Turnabout	Natsume	●●●●	69
Twisted Metal III	**989 Studios**	●●◐	**16**
Twisted Metal 4	**989 Studios**	●●●●	**28**
Twisted Metal: Small Brawl	Sony CEA	●●◐	52
Tyco RC: Assault With a Battery	Mattel	●●	38
Ultimate 8-Ball	THQ	●●●●	22
Ultimate Fighting Championship	Crave	●●◐	40
UmJammer Lammy	Sony CEA	●●●◐	24
The Unholy War	Eidos	●●●	14
Uprising X	3DO	●●●	17
Urban Chaos	Eidos	●●	33
Vagrant Story	Square EA	●●●◐	33
Valkyrie Profile	Enix	●●●●	36
Vampire Hunter D	Jaleco	●●	37
Vanark	Jaleco	●●●	32
Vandal Hearts II	Konami	●●●◐	27
Vanguard Bandits	Working Designs	●●◐	33
Vanishing Point	Acclaim	●●●◐	44
Vegas Games 2000	3DO	●●●◐	27
V.I.P.	Ubi Soft	●●	51
Vigilante 8	**Activision**	●●●●	**10**
Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	●●●	29
Virtual Kasparov	Titus	●●	49
VR Baseball '99	Interplay	●●●◐	11
VR Sports Powerboat Racing	Interplay	●	10
Vs.	THQ	●	3
Walt Disney World Quest Magical Racing Tour	Eidos	●●◐	33
Walt Disney's Jungle Book Rhythm n' Groove	Ubi Soft	●●●	41
War Jetz	3DO	●●	48
WarGames: DefCon 1	MGM Interactive	●●●●	12
Warpath: Jurassic Park	Electronic Arts	●●	27
Warriors of Might and Magic	3DO	●●●	41
Warzone 2100	Eidos	●●●●	22
WCW Backstage Assault	EA Games	●●	40
WCW Mayhem	Electronic Arts	●●●◐	26
WCW Nitro	**THQ**	●●◐	**5**
WCW/nWo Thunder	THQ	●	17
The Weakest Link	Activision	●●●◐	51
Wheel of Fortune	**Hasbro**	●●●●	**17**
Wheel of Fortune 2	Hasbro	●●●●	39
Winnie the Pooh: Kindergarten	Bam	n/a	n/a
Winnie the Pooh: Preschool	Bam	n/a	n/a
Who Wants to Be a Millionaire: 2nd Edition	Sony CEA	●●◐	35
Who Wants to Be a Millionaire: 3rd Edition	Sony CEA	●◐	47
Wild 9	Interplay	●●●◐	15
Wild Arms 2	Sony CEA	●●●◐	33
The Wild Thornberrys: Animal Adventure	Mattel	●◐	41
WipeOut 3	Psygnosis	●●●●	26
Woody Woodpecker Racing	Konami	●●	40
World Cup 98	EA Sports	●●●	10
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	◐	39
World Is Not Enough	Electronic Arts	●●●	40
World's Scariest Police Chases	Activision	●●	47
Worms Armageddon	Hasbro	●●●◐	27
Worms World Party	Ubi Soft	●●●●	55
Wu-Tang Shaolin Style	Activision	●●●	28
WWF Attitude	Acclaim	●●●●	24
WWF SmackDown!	**THQ**	●●●●◐	**31**
WWF SmackDown! 2	**THQ**	●●●●●	**40**
WWF War Zone	**Acclaim**	●●●●	**12**
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	◐	55
X-Files	Fox Interactive	●●●	28
X Games Pro Boarder	ESPN Digital	●●●●	14
X-Men: Children of the Atom	Acclaim	●●	6
X-Men: Mutant Academy	Activision	●●●	36
X-Men: Mutant Academy 2	Activision	●●●	50
Xena: Warrior Princess	Electronic Arts	●●●◐	26
Xenogears	Square EA	●●●●	14
You Don't Know Jack!	Berkeley Systems	●●●●◐	25
You Don't Know Jack! Mock 2	Sierra	●●	40
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Forbidden Memories	Konami	●◐	57

READER REVIEWS

Matrix and Tenchu still provoking fights

We want your reviews of the best and worst games, so write a review and send it to opm@ziffdavis.com. We can't publish everyone's, so keep it short, be witty, and remember that not every game deserves a five-disc rating just because you like it!

ENTER THE MATRIX

What you said: "It's not surprising that the Wachowski brothers are gamers. Many of *Enter the Matrix*'s features seem to come from someone who knows how it feels to waste 50 bucks on a crappy game of your favorite movie. So how do you change all that? By getting fans more involved. A lot of work was put into doing exactly that, with the photo-realistic graphics, massive and incredibly detailed levels, and even the actors themselves—not to mention the exclusive story line and movie footage.

"The game isn't without its flaws. The animation, which is probably the coolest part of the game, is a bit choppy. The driving missions are a complete waste of time. I'd rather be shot seven times in the chest like Neo than replay the hovercraft missions. It may not be as revolutionary as its movies, but one thing's for sure: Movie-licensed games will change because of it."

Your Score ●●●●◐

Eli Dasilva
PS2mark1189@aol.com

> **"I'd rather be shot seven times in the chest like Neo than replay the hovercraft missions [in *Enter the Matrix*]."**

What we said: "In truth, the game is almost a cultural must-play, the way the movie is a must-see."

Our Score ●●●

MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER

What you said: "Mace Griffin lacks some seriously needed multiplayer support, has inconsistent graphics, and could use a lot more characters. But none of that changes the fact that mowing down huge numbers of aliens and bad guys with futuristic weapons never gets tiresome. It's a flawed game, but it's long, it's packed with a lot of action, and it's just plain fun. Definitely worth the $3.50 to rent."

Your Score ●●●◐

Brian McWalters
footballmanfs@yahoo.com

What we said: "Cool idea. Really, really lackluster execution."

Our Score ●●

TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN

What you said: "I am tired of seeing people not giving *Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven* the respect it deserves. Out of all three games, the overall feel of this one is the best. Some levels are a bit easy, but that's what the difficulty settings are for. Each level has a different feel and challenge. There's a good mix.

"I hear all these complaints about pitfalls. The whole point of a pitfall is to be sneaky; if you were patient and observant like a ninja is, you would be able to easily see and avoid them. The fighting is a little simplistic, but I think it does a great job for the kind of game it is; the only fighting you should do is against bosses. This game is great for what it is: a ninja simulator."

Your Score ●●●●

Mike White
shadowrunnerforhire@earthlink.net

What we said: "For every moment of virile exhilaration you get from pulling off a series of stealth kills, you have to deal with a lot of shoddiness for much of the game."

Our Score ●●●

VEXX

What you said: "I think that *Vexx* is a great platformer. The only real problems with it are the load times and the camera, but most of the platformers on PS2 have that problem, anyway. And since y'all complain about how dark it gets when you use the sundial, let me help you out: There is a button on your TV called 'menu.' You can use that to then go to 'brightness,' and then you can turn the brightness up so you can see!!"

Your Score ●●●◐

Mark Pettway
pettway2032@msn.com

What we said: "At one point, I even slid off the far side of a platform that was resting directly against a wall! It's a real shame, because I'm pretty sure there's a decent game underneath all the crap."

Our Score ●●

NO CHEATING

1. d, 2. c, 3. b, 4. c, 5. a, 6. b, 7. b, 8. c, 9. c, 10. c, 11. d, 12. b, 13. d, 14. c, 15. b, 16. a, 17. b, 18. d, 19. d, 20. c, 21. a, 22. b, 23. c, 24. b, 25. d, 26. a, 27. c, 28. d, 29. c, 30. c.

P.S.A.T.

Happy Birthday to us

OPM is 6 years old this month, so to celebrate, we put together a bunch of questions that should be easy to answer if you've been a regular reader all along.

1. Which of the following is not a location you travel to in *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*?
a. Burma
b. Philippines
c. Singapore
d. Japan

2. Michael Ancel, director of *Beyond Good & Evil*, was also responsible for what platformer series?
a. *Super Mario Bros.*
b. *Sly Cooper*
c. *Rayman*
d. *Jak & Daxter*

3. Which of these companies has never had an ESPN license for sports games?
a. Konami
b. Electronic Arts
c. Sega
d. Sony

4. *Champions of Norrath* developer Snowblind Studios was previously responsible for which game?
a. *Summoner*
b. *Everquest Online Adventures*
c. *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*
d. *Shrek Super Party*

5. Which of the following was the predecessor to *Soul Calibur*?
a. *Soul Blade*
b. *Soul Reaver*
c. *Soul Fighter*
d. *Soul of the Samurai*

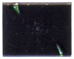
6. Which was the first fully polygonal football game?
a. *Madden NFL 97*
b. *NFL GameDay 97*
c. *NFL Blitz*
d. *Madden NFL 98*

7. Which well-known composer writes the music for the *Metal Gear Solid* series?
a. Hans Zimmer
b. Harry Gregson-Williams
c. John Barry
d. Michael Kamen

8. In the original *Soul Blade* on PS1, who walked away with the sword at the end of the game?
a. Mitsurugi
b. Cevantes
c. Siegfried
d. Li Long

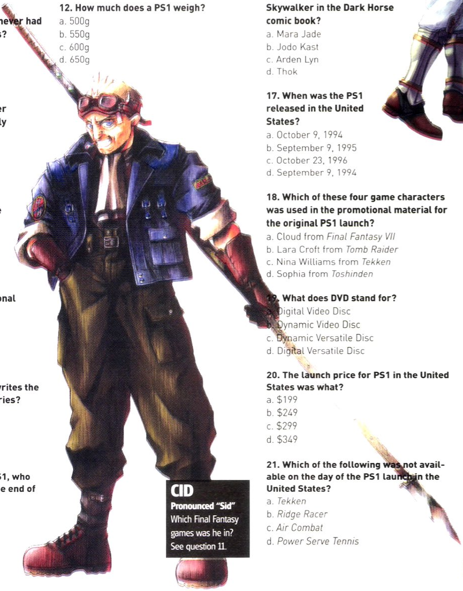
9. How many PS1s have been sold worldwide?
a. 1,000,000
b. 10,000,000
c. 100,000,000
d. 1,000,000,000

10. What was the name of the first interactive computer game?
a. *Pong*
b. *Space Invaders*
c. *Spacewar*
d. *Gunfight*



11. A character named Cid appears in which *Final Fantasy* game?
a. *Final Fantasy II*
b. *Final Fantasy VII*
c. *Final Fantasy Tactics*
d. All of the above

12. How much does a PS1 weigh?
a. 500g
b. 550g
c. 600g
d. 650g



CID
Pronounced "Sid"
Which Final Fantasy games was he in? See question 11.

13. Solid Snake's real name is what?
a. Colin
b. Phil
c. Bob
d. Dave

14. *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain* was released in what year?
a. 1994
b. 1995
c. 1996
d. 1997

15. Which Crystal Dynamics game didn't appear on PlayStation?
a. *Gex*
b. *Crash N Burn*
c. *Total Eclipse*
d. *Soul Reaver*

16. Which character, featured in the PS1 game *Star Wars Masters of Teräs Käsi*, married Luke Skywalker in the Dark Horse comic book?
a. Mara Jade
b. Jodo Kast
c. Arden Lyn
d. Thok

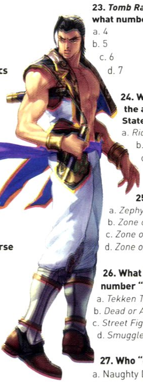
17. When was the PS1 released in the United States?
a. October 9, 1994
b. September 9, 1995
c. October 23, 1996
d. September 9, 1994

18. Which of these four game characters was used in the promotional material for the original PS1 launch?
a. Cloud from *Final Fantasy VII*
b. Lara Croft from *Tomb Raider*
c. Nina Williams from *Tekken*
d. Sophia from *Toshinden*

19. What does DVD stand for?
a. Digital Video Disc
b. Dynamic Video Disc
c. Dynamic Versatile Disc
d. Digital Versatile Disc

20. The launch price for PS1 in the United States was what?
a. $199
b. $249
c. $299
d. $349

21. Which of the following was not available on the day of the PS1 launch in the United States?
a. *Tekken*
b. *Ridge Racer*
c. *Air Combat*
d. *Power Serve Tennis*



22. Which character did we see first?
a. Lara Croft
b. Crash Bandicoot
c. PaRappa the Rapper
d. Cloud

23. *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness* is what numbered *Tomb Raider* game?
a. 4
b. 5
c. 6
d. 7

24. What was the first PS2 game off the assembly line in the United States?
a. *Ridge Racer V*
b. *Smuggler's Run*
c. *Midnight Club*
d. *Wild Wild Racing*

25. *Z.O.E.* stands for what?
a. *Zephyr Overdrive Extreme*
b. *Zone of Energy*
c. *Zone of Excitement*
d. *Zone of the Enders*

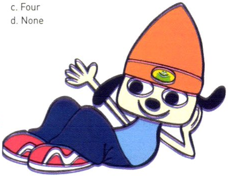
26. What PS2 game carries the serial number "001"?
a. *Tekken Tag Tournament*
b. *Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore*
c. *Street Fighter EX3*
d. *Smuggler's Run*

27. Who "owns" Crash Bandicoot?
a. Naughty Dog
b. Sony
c. Universal
d. Fox

28. What was "wrong" with *Gran Turismo 2*?
a. Could not be 100 per cent completed
b. Acura Integra Coupe lacked a second gear
c. Game would occasionally delete your garage
d. All of the above

29. Who is Angelina Jolie's dad?
a. Harrison Ford
b. Clint Eastwood
c. John Voight
d. Adrian Jolie

30. Counting *P.S.X.*, *OPM*'s predecessor, how many editors in chief predated John Davison?
a. Two
b. Three
c. Four
d. None



NEXT MONTH

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

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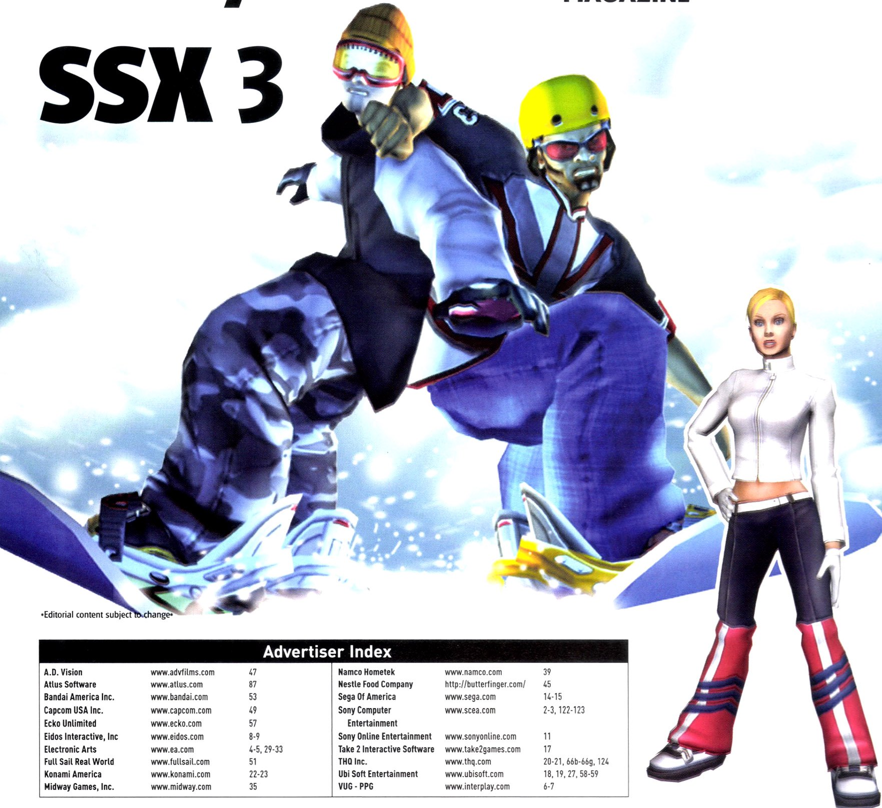
SSX 3



•Editorial content subject to change•

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Downhill Domination. Are you equipped for the challenge?
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Language
Violence
PlayStation 2
www.us.playstation.com

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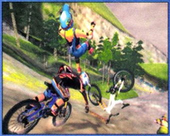
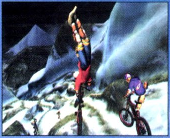
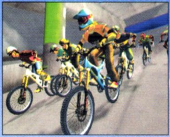
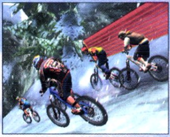
Downhill DOMINATION™





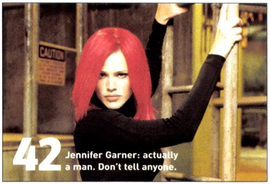




Sack up, gentlemen. The first downhill mountain bike racing game for PlayStation®2 is here. Introducing Downhill Domination,™ where to get to the top you have to get to the bottom first. That means bombing down wickedly steep mountains. Busting tricks off 100-foot cliffs. And brawling your way past opponents with a combat system that lets you punch, kick and even hurl water bottles. The prize? The latest high-tech bike parts and sponsorships from real-world manufacturers. And the most admired *cojones* on the mountain.

MANITOU
Dorado

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.


42 Jennifer Garner: actually a man. Don't tell anyone.

REVIEWS

PS2 GAMES

92 Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction ★★★½
93 Bombastic ★★½
100 Disgaea: Hour of Darkness ★★★★
98 ESPN NFL Football ★★★★½
93 Freaky Flyers ★★★½
92 Futurama ★★½
93 The Great Escape ★★★½
97 Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward ★★½
97 The Italian Job ★★
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96 The Simpsons Hit & Run ★★★★
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PERIPHERALS

101 5.4 GameScreen ★
100 Blaster ★★★★
101 Predator Wireless ★★★

Awesome sword = supreme executive power. **54**

ON THIS MONTH'S EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE PS2 DVD

PLAYGROUND
Soul Calibur II
Hunter: The Reckoning – Wayward
Silent Hill 3
XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Operation Resurrection
Sphinx and the Shadow of Set
ESPN NFL Football (NFL 2K4)
Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior

VIDEOS
True Crime: Streets of L.A.
Jak II
Rise to Honor

STORIES
Medal of Honor: Rising Sun (pt.2)
Eye Toy
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds
Enter the Matrix

DOWNLOADS
Silent Line: Armored Core
MLB 2K3
Whirl Tour
Zone of the Enders: The Second Runner

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Marketing Team **Kim Yuen, Chris Hagedorn, Steve Williams**
Executive Producers **Andrew House, Marilyn Weyant**
Format Q&A **Sam Bradley, DeMarlo King**
Account Coordinator **Eric Ippolito**

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3D Artists **Jason Robinson, Philip Williamson, David Hayes**
Producer **Jessi Harrison**
President **Katherine Williams**
Technical Director **Tim Edwards**

SPECIAL THANKS
Tom Gillan, Gerald Martin, Jim Williams, Michelle Manahan, Christine DeNezza

SOULFUL

FROM THE EDGE OF SOUL TO THE EDGE OF MADNESS

This month's disc is simply awesome. Most important, you get a playable demo of the spectacular *Soul Calibur II* (check out Replay for strategies for the two characters). When you're done with that, try the following challenges for a few of the other playables on the disc.

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Issue 72
NTSC U/C
SCUS 97
DVD
RP-M

SILENT HILL 3

THE DETAILS:
A somewhat brief interlude from about halfway in the game, this demo gives you a pretty fair idea of what the game's about: gritty, gruesome, creepy, and sometimes just plain *wrong*.

HAVE YOU TRIED...
...beating the demo? Explore the second floor, making sure to pick up the Oxydol. Then go down to the first floor and find the Pork Liver. Next, head up to the fifth floor and find the Matches, then go to the Gallery and combine the Oxydol, Liver, and Matches in the bucket in front of the big painting.
...restarting once you've beaten the demo or died? We think you'll like Heather's new outfit.

WOLFENSTEIN: OPERATION RESURRECTION

THE DETAILS:
Two full levels give you a chance to really sink your fangs into *Wolfenstein*. You'll be able to explore both the Catacombs and the Bombed Factory. You get booted out of the demo if you die, though.

HAVE YOU TRIED...
...finding both the secret areas in the Catacombs? In the upper hall, there's a door that opens when you hit the switch in the room with four coffins. Behind that door is a helmet. And in that coffin room, one of the sarcophagi has a breakable front, with a helmet and a chalice inside.
...kicking stuff? R2 lashes out a kick, and there's plenty of breakable items in the game.

XGRA: EXTREME G RACING ASSOCIATION

THE DETAILS:
We suspect it's not actually possible for humans without cybernetic augmentation to process information at the speed *XGRA* delivers it on this one track. But we could be wrong.

HAVE YOU TRIED...
...hitting the turbo pads? Drive over enough of them and your bike will go so fast that your screen will fade into an almost incomprehensible blur. Don't worry, it only lasts a short time.
...all the different weapons? Our favorite is the Rapier, which gives you these two energy blades, one on each side of your bike. Cool.
...not hitting the walls? HAHAHAHAHA. Good luck.

SPHINX AND THE SHADOW OF SET

THE DETAILS:
This enormous demo gives you two full levels to explore. Be sure not to miss Uruk Castle, in which you control the hysterical mummy instead of Sphinx. Check out those animations!

HAVE YOU TRIED...
...both levels? Uruk Hills is your basic action-puzzler, while the almost indescribably phallic Uruk Castle requires a bit more brainpower.
...beating Uruk Castle? It requires a number of different steps, all based on basic elements that the Mummy can get "charged" with (he can't die because, see, he's *already dead*). You'll need to keep switching out the key in the back of the main room.

WARHAMMER 40,000: FIRE WARRIOR

THE DETAILS:
You get only one early level here, but it gives you the basic idea of what the game's about. Be aware, though, that the game does open up from time to time—it's not all trenches and tunnels.

HAVE YOU TRIED...
...checking out the cool effects? For example, certain weapons are so hot that you'll notice the air wavering above them. And your default weapon has a little screen on it that accurately reflects what it's pointed at. Neat.
...getting close to the guys with the chainsaws? For some reason, the slashes you see across your screen look really cool.

DISC PROBLEMS?

Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "OPM Replacement Disc" to the address below with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the right one.

Also, if you have a malfunctioning or non-working demo disc, call SCEA at 1-800-345-SONY. They will provide instructions to obtain repair or replacement services.

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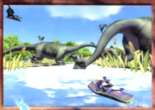
Rides Gone Wild™

KEEP OUT
SEA-DOO

Theme park inspired locales

Each lap changes to open new paths and shortcuts



Insane stunt system

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Lyrics
Mild Language

PlayStation.2

rainbow STUDIOS

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YOU'RE SOFT
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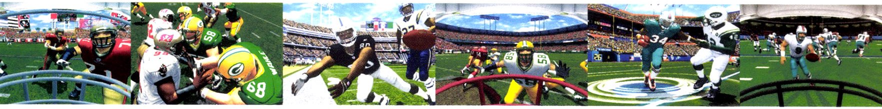
NFL FOOTBALL



In the First Person Football™ mode, I'm on the field, staring you down. I can see you coming. You got nothing. No matter what the play, I own you. C'mon, Warren, line up. It's you and me. Let's do this.

AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER 4TH.

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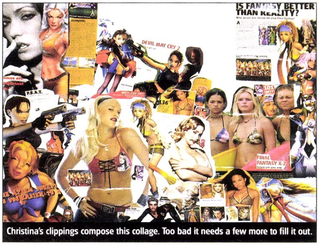
35 Number of "offensive" items clipped from our February 2003 issue by an irate Christina Grassold.

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow
Metal Gear Solid 3 Snake Eater
Prince of Persia Sands of Time
59 Awesome Games
Need for Speed Underground
Enter the Matrix
The Hulk
Ape Escape 2
Arc the Lad
1378 Ratings

Is *Need for Speed: Underground* anything special? KauaiGuy kinda doubts it: "EA's got their work cut out for them, trying to distinguish this title to its target audience from Rockstar's [*Midnight Club II*]," he says. That doesn't seem to concern ScorchX2K. "My drool soaked the page, which made the ink run down, making [the feature] unreadable," he says.



Christina's clippings compose this collage. Too bad it needs a few more to fill it out.

Sexism Exemplified

Recent statistics show that 30 percent of all videogame players are female. That is why I am so surprised to see this type of advertising in your magazine. My mother and I are the avid gamers of the house. I also attend an all-girls high school, where all of my friends are videogame fanatics. However, no girl would buy a magazine with this type of blatant sexism in it.

I hope you know that you are losing 30 percent of your audience with things like this. I received one magazine of yours, and this is what I found. You even openly claim to purposely display scantily clad girls all over your magazine, and seem proud of that. Do you really have that small a quantity of information about these games that you need to fill page after page with girls? Obviously, you either have no experience with the games or are just too unintelligent to point out facts such as replay value or graphics. You must not have any higher intelligence than "look at the hot chick." I would point out how degrading your captions are, but it is obvious that you never cared in the first place.

In closing, I want to say that your magazine would be just as appealing to the male audience if it displayed more game statistics than chicks in bikinis. As for me, I will never touch an *Official PlayStation Magazine* again. I'll stick to *Game Informer*. I hope your magazine humiliates the women on your staff.

Christina Grassold
Menomonee Falls, WI

We get this kind of letter every now and then. Basically, you can't please everyone. If you don't like our content, don't read our mag. Actually, it wasn't this letter's words that caught our attention, but rather its enclosure (the "this is what I found" part). Christina tried to accentuate her point by sending us an envelope full of clippings from our February issue, full of everything including the shot of Jenna Jameson (understandable), an ad for *Black & Bruised*, the otherwise innocuous pictures of the female characters from our *Rygar* Dream Cast—basically almost *anything* having to do with women. You'd think female characters were a big part of modern videogames or something....

Well Said

I am writing to inform you of some startling events I have recently witnessed. Outside my home, two 9-year-olds fought to the death with broadswords. An 8-year-old decided it would be a great idea to skateboard in the lion's cage during feeding time at the city zoo. I saw an 11-year-old steal our family's Buick while holding a machine gun and ranting about picking up a prostitute. A 16-year-old had his friend videotape him plummeting off a cavern in his car. To top it all off, I saw children jet-ski in shark-infested waters, backyard wrestling matches, and a boy tried to convince some females to play volleyball in barely-there bikinis in the middle of November.

Sound a bit unrealistic? So is the claim that mature content in videogames affects children.

Paul Christiansen
Cedarburg, WI

We'll admit, while we agree with this perspective, we're awfully bored with the whole issue of game violence and its effect on us. Kudos to you, Paul, for writing such an engaging letter that actually makes us pay attention to what you have to say.

Food for Thought

In reference to the confusion surrounding the subtitle of *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, I do believe that it comes from a Cambodian ritual. During the Vietnam War, our Navy SEALs sometimes operated with the Cambodian Khmer Rogue fighters. One of their hazing rituals for initiation was "snake eating." Basically, you ate the venom sac of a poisonous snake, got terribly sick, and hoped fate was smiling on you that day. If you survived, you were considered a snake-eater, and far harder to kill in battle. You can read a little

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GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

From message boards to printed page

OPM's monthly roundup of hot topics, gathered from the *OPM* message board at gamers.com.

AAARGH!

What are some of the most frustrating gaming moments you've experienced? **Mad_emoPS2** poses the question, answering, "The boss battle in the church in *Xenosaga*—I almost gave up after eight hours of trying."

Liquideagle says, "Lu Bu is also really frustrating in *Dynasty Warriors*," and **DiBurnout** throws a hardcore GameCube shooter at us with this remark: "*Ikaruga*. The whole damn thing. God bless."

ESCORT SCHMESCORT

elman777 wants to know if anyone actually enjoys escort missions in games. "I understand it when it's in army games like *SOCOM*," he comments, "but platformers and action games...why?"

ArlanKels answers with, "If it's something like *TimeSplitters*, it's fun to be *against* the escorting group—escorting the guy is only slightly as entertaining."

Dolbytone is quick to respond: "Excellent question! Answer: NO."

WILL NFL STREET SUCK?

Brianisshort takes on the tall task of challenging what EA Big is thinking with the newly announced *NFL Street*. "I'm skeptical," he says. "I see very few ways the *NBA Street* concept can be turned into a good football game. Besides a couple of cool juke moves and bone-crunching tackles, I don't see how else they can twist the regular football game."

"It's like when *SSX* was a big hit," adds **ohjtbehaaave**, "they tried to capitalize on it with other games, like *Sled Storm* for PS2, which actually was ruined by using the *SSX* tricks. This NFL game may be fun for 10 minutes, but that's it."

"I'll try it out," says a matter-of-fact **MetalGearJared**.

And **Death_Strikes** certainly lives up to his name with this offering: "They could have cars drive through the game. What would be better than catching an interception only to be hit by a bus?"

EVERYTHING OR NOTHING... IS IT SOMETHING?

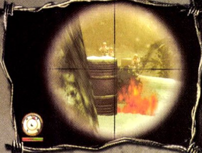
Gamers are split about the new *Bond* game's switch to a third-person perspective as opposed to the traditional first-person view. **edgerunner** is happy about it. " I'm not a big FPS fan," he admits. "Now that *Bond* is going third person, I'm psyched both as a Bond fan and as a game player. The fact that they're using Brosnan's voice in addition to his image is no small bonus either. (All they have to do is add Halle Berry.)"

"I'm disappointed, but just because I can't get enough of first-person shooters," **theheed** writes. "It may turn out to be a great game, but I probably won't be as quick to pick it up as I was with Nightfire."

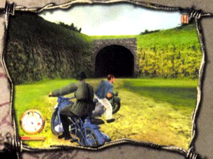
"I'm excited," says **SpideyBuddy**. "*Nightfire* showed that EA didn't have that much more to do with the FPS part of Bond's life (it sucked, in other words)—I'm happy to see EA going in a new direction. Looks promising."

THE GREAT ESCAPE™

Shot down behind enemy lines.
A prisoner of the Nazi war machine.
You must guide your band of heroes in the
greatest escape in history.



Strike at the Reich with an
authentic WWII arsenal.



Commandeer motorcycles, jeeps,
and other military vehicles as
you speed to freedom!

Attack from the shadows as you sneak
past Nazi guards and the Gestapo.

PlayStation®2

XBOX

PC

MGM INTERACTIVE

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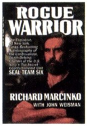
INPUT

Urine works well on scratched discs, too.

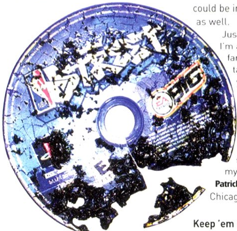
about this in Richard Marchinko's autobiography, *Rogue Warrior*.
Matthew Sawyer
foomaster005@hotmail.com

And here we thought we finally knew what *Snake Eater* meant when we saw Snake consume a big long snake in the trailer for the game at E3. Perhaps it's not so literal, but Matthew provides an intriguing revelation, to be sure.



Zapped!

In issue 69 in your Ask Us Anything section, you said you could get scratches off a disc by microwaving it for three minutes on high. I tried this with the *OPM* disc for issue 51 and the disc crisped!
Josh W.
Address withheld

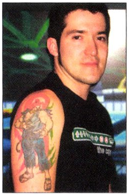


What?! You mean concentrated energy that would make you explode from within if you were exposed to it can't fix a measly disc scratch? Hogwash! Well, maybe it works only with something grander than a demo disc. Try it with your copy of *Vice City* sometime, won't you?

Zapped Again!

You said if you were to put a PlayStation 2 CD in the microwave for three minutes, it removes the scratches and fixes the game. I left it there for 10 seconds and the CD started to bend. The bottom started to peel off, and lights were popping out. Now it doesn't even fit in the PS2. So I believe you owe me the game *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* or $50!!!!!
"Shind"
Address withheld

Hmm.... So maybe that method *doesn't* work so well. Nuts. Maybe if you put it in a bowl of Campbell's Soup for insulation, that would help. Yeah, that's it.



Tattoo Time

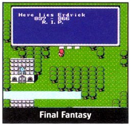
I've been reading your magazine since the first issue, mainly because of the great game coverage and good reviews. Lately, I've seen some great tattoos, which I thought were pretty cool. Not wanting to be left out, I went to my local tattoo parlor and endured some pain so that I could be in your magazine, as well.

Just kidding! Actually, I'm a big *Street Fighter* fan, and I've had my tattoo for about five years now. I'm glad to see that I'm not the only one out there with a videogame-related tattoo. Here are some pictures of my tattoo.
Patrick Perez
Chicago, IL

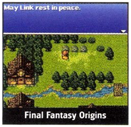
Keep 'em comin', folks. If you're crazy enough to mark your body up for life with something game-related, we're crazy enough to tell the world about it.

Fantastic Question

I picked up *Final Fantasy Origins* for PS1 recently just for ol' time's sake. I loved the NES *Final Fantasy* growing up and figured I'd check out the changes that were made for the *Origins* remake. One interesting one I found was in the city of Elfland: The *Origins* version features a hidden tombstone that reads, "May Link rest in peace"—an obvious stab at *The Legend of Zelda*. I could swear it read something else 13 years ago, though. Am I crazy?
Justin Warford
Sacramento, CA


Here lies Erdrick
837 - 866
R. I. P.

Final Fantasy


May Link rest in peace.

Final Fantasy Origins

If you're crazy, Justin, it has nothing to do with your *FF* memories. The NES version did say something different: "Here lies Erdrick. 837-866. R.I.P." Erdrick, of course, was the protagonist of *Dragon Warrior*, the other revolutionary RPG at the time. Interestingly, the original Japanese version did indeed allude to Link—it was changed in the translation for the old game but reinstated for the remake.

QUICK HITS

LISTEN UP!

Videogame consumers should stop making Nickelodeon videogames because people may get sick of them.
Mike Boomazian
Portland, CT

You hear that, everyone? Stop making Nickelodeon videogames!

CREST OR COLGATE?

Toothpaste is great for scratches on games, DVDs, CDs, and even 45 records. Just massage it with a soft cloth until gone.
Teresa Russell
Henderson, TN

We don't know about *that*...but we do recommend toothpaste for cavity prevention and generally healthy teeth.

ENTER THE SCOOTER

Who is replacing Todd Zuniga as an editor for *OPM*?
Stephen Laprade
webcrawler3@msn.com

Glad you asked, Stephen! Starting next issue, Thierry "Scooter" Nguyen joins our staff—you may already know him if you read *Computer Gaming World*. Yeah, *CGW*'s pretty pissed at us for stealing their wonder kid and turning him to the good side of gaming.

Not So Deee-Lited

I just read in *OPM* 70 about Deee-Lite's Lady Miss Kier suing Sega. I can't believe this woman. You may not be aware of it, but the voice was supplied by Apollo Smile for the first game. She was moving with a career as the "Live Action Anime Girl." Her look is exactly that of Ulala. Her music was the style used in *Space Channel 5*. In fact, she was supposed to voice the second game, along with supplying the singing voice.
Maggie Harris
MaggieH@sport.rr.com

Right on, Maggie. Any groove Deee-Lite may have left in our heart circa 1990 has been swept away by this frivolous lawsuit. We don't know where Apollo's been hiding the past couple of years (her official website no longer exists), but this cutie certainly makes *us* smile. Enjoy her picture. (And if you're out there, Apollo, let us know what you're up to now!)

MELISSA WILLIAMSON

Silent Hill 3's lead voice actress has quite the prolific anime résumé: Cassandra on *Reign: The Conqueror*, Julia on *Cowboy Bebop*, and many more.

ASK US ANYTHING!

Monkey voices, monster music, and more

SHAFTING THE DIAL-UP

Q. Why is it that so many online games are broadband only? Not everyone can afford it, so a lot of people miss out on games like *SOCOM*.

Donald V. Losel, Jr.
Buffalo, NY

A. It's unfortunate that this has to be the case, but in order to create the best online experience possible, broadband is almost always the way to go. For games like *SOCOM* and new sports games, voice chat absolutely requires a broadband connection.

SINGING THE SILENCE

Q. I recently bought the latest issue of *OPM* and watched the disc's *Silent Hill 3* trailer. I love the song on that video, but I can't find it. I played the trailer for a bunch of friends and they all said the same thing: "I love that song, but can't tell ya what it is." Now I have a bunch of other people who want it but can't find it. So, I would be forever in your debt if you could please tell me what that song is and who made it.

J.R. Shartzer
STRANGEJAMES@aol.com

A. No problem, J.R. The song in question is "You're Not Here." *Silent Hill* maestro Akira Yamaoka composed it, while the Heather actress herself, Melissa Williamson, chips in with the vocals. Interesting tidbit: This is the first game released in which the voice actress sings the theme song. Now, about that "debt"....

APING THE POKÉMON VOICES?

Q. In *Ape Escape 2*, I noticed something interesting about Billy and Natalie's voices. They sound an awful lot like Ash and Misty from the *Pokémon* television show. Am I hearing things, or are the voice actors the same?

YodaVIVIVI@aol.com

A. Well, you're only halfway hearing things. Rachael Lillis, who voices Misty (as well as Jesse of Team Rocket) on *Pokémon*, does indeed lend her talents to *Ape Escape 2*. However, Veronica "Ash" Taylor (that's right—Ash is a girl) has no involvement with the game.

A DEVILISH QUERY

Q. I love all of Blizzard's games, and I was wondering if *Diablo II* was ever released for PS2, seeing as how there is *Diablo* for PS1.

Mitch Payjack
bighummerxxl@hotmail.com

A. We never got *Diablo II* on PS2, unfortunately, but we did get the next best thing in *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*. And if you're really into hack-n-slash RPGs, 2003 could be the best year yet, with both *Dark Alliance II* (page 68) and *Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest* (page 60) coming this fall.

THE GAME WITH NO FEAR

Q. I have to find out! Where is the *Daredevil* game for PS2, or the *Dungeons & Dragons* game that was supposed to come out in March?

Tod Joossens
tod.joossens@comcast.net

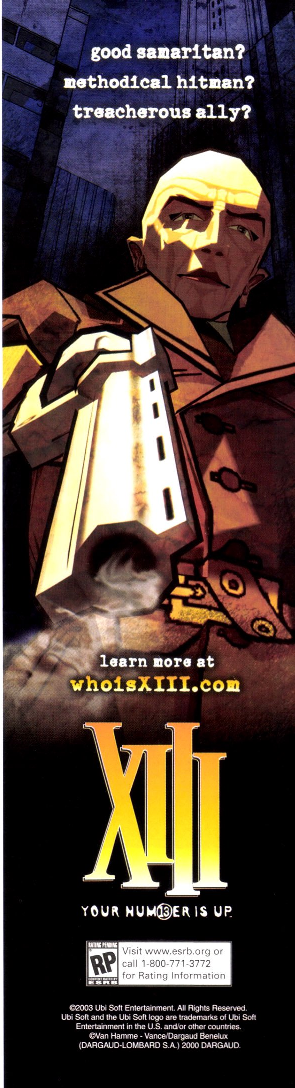
A. We saw video of *Daredevil* at E3, but Encore remains pretty tight-lipped about any release date info. As for *D&D Heroes*, Atari shafted us on that one—it's Xbox-exclusive this fall. No matter—*Dark Alliance II* and *Champions of Norrath* will probably be better, anyway.

EASIEST ANSWER OF THE MONTH

Q. Do you know when the PS2 will be $5? 'Cause I've been hearing lots of people say that.

Darrell Gray
Acton, CA

A. Well..."lots of people" are stupid. Maybe you can find one for five bucks at a garage sale in about 10 years. We'd rather be gearing up for PS5 by then.



Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for Rating Information

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TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Fantasy Violence

PlayStation®2

XBOX

Outrage games

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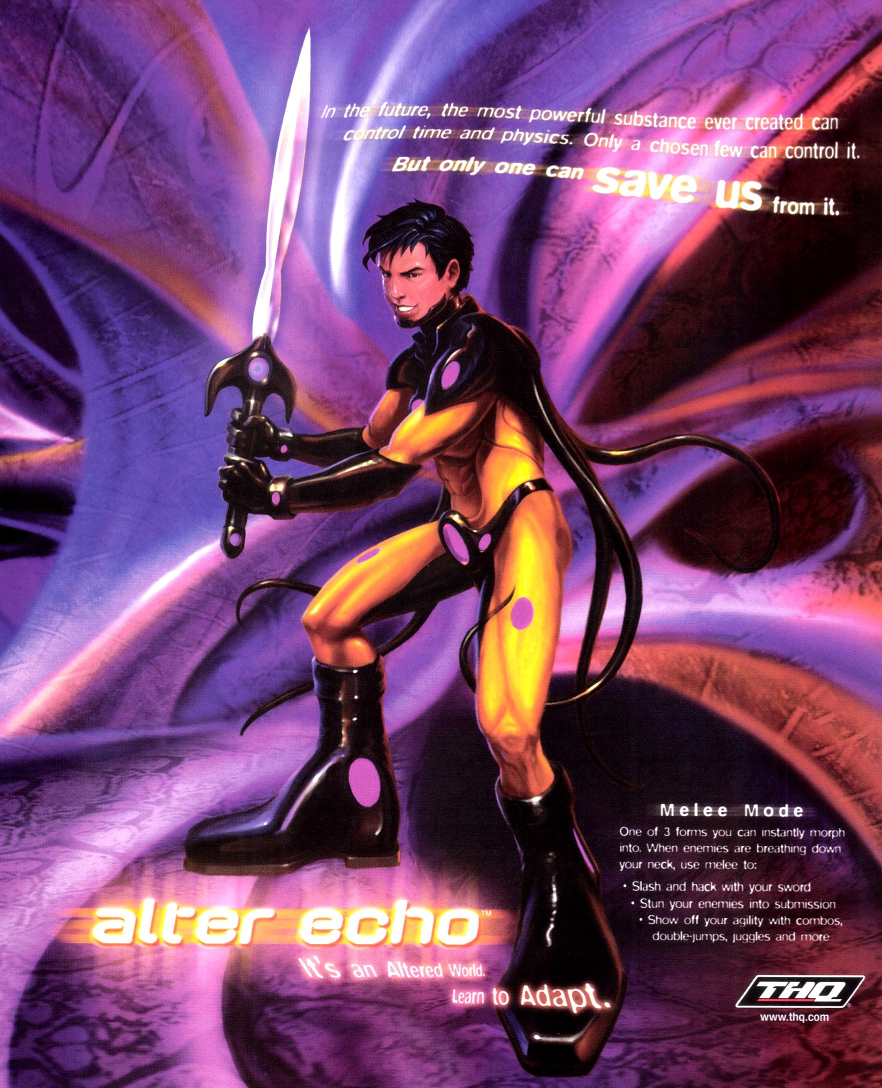
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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Violence

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SPIN

News, views, opinion, wit, and wisdom.

42 NICE OUTFIT

Enter to win cool *Alias* goodies!

The latest on Acclaim's cool-looking *Alias* game. Plus! Your chance to win a trip for two to the *Alias* set. Perhaps you'll run into the lovely Ms. Garner?

INSIDE SPIN

Your guide to everything PlayStation

28 Day Planner
What are you going to do with yourself in August? Don't know? We'll tell you.

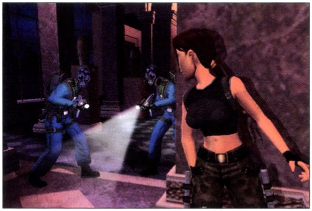
34 The Clancyverse
Liked *Splinter Cell*? That's good, 'cause there's more where that came from.

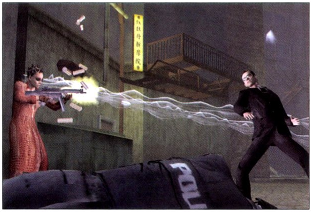
38 Penny Arcade
A brief commentary on the Activision vs. Viacom *Star Trek* lawsuit.

41 100 Bullets
Comic-book fans can soon get lost in twisty-turny conspiracies on PS2.

50 Only In Japan
A marathon running game. Ooh! That sounds like fun.

51 Clish MacLaver
Our gossip columnist dishes all the latest and greatest gaming dirt.





WE'R

Quality means nothing if

Once upon a time, a movie license was the kiss of death. These days, though, a cinematic connection spells big bucks.

"2003 will go down as 'The Blockbuster Summer' in the world of electronic gaming," says Pete Snyder, CEO of New Media Strategies (a research and marketing firm specializing in online brand promotion). "From Ah-nold and Angelina, all the way to Zion, Hollywood is dominating both buzz and demand for games."

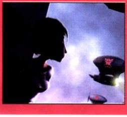
In a new study, NMS found that the vast majority of gaming consumers (67 percent) are more likely to buy or rent videogames if they have a movie tie-in. And that tie-in can be wholly tenuous, as is the case with *Tomb Raider*: NMS found that *Angel of Darkness* was the No. 1 "most buzzed about" game, despite the fact that the movie and the game are completely unrelated beyond the basic license. What's more, nearly a quarter of online gaming consumers said that they would buy a game based on a film even *before* seeing the film in theaters.

ANGEL OF SALES

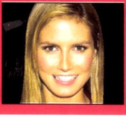
But what of the games themselves? Of all the big summer-movie tie-ins, *Tomb Raider* garnered the biggest buzz—and yet it may be the most disappointing title of the year. *Angel of Darkness* received just two stars from us, and it's earned a dismal 58.9 percent on www.gamerankings.com.

But poor reviews haven't stopped the brass at Eidos from counting all the cash rolling in. "We're really pleased with the sales so far," Eidos Interactive President Rob Dyer told us. "At this point in the game's life, it's

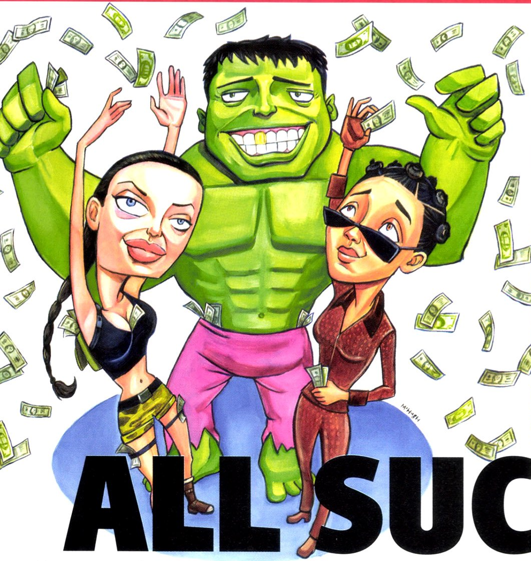
36 GAME MAP
Every PS2 game studio
On a handy color map!



46 BEYOND
Good & Evil
The game and the visionary



50 BOND GIRLS
Heidi Klum in her underwear
And some other people, too



ALL SUCKERS

the name's on the silver screen

actually the most successful game in the whole series. Critically, *Tomb Raider 2* was the big game—but in terms of sales, it was number three that was the pinnacle. Consider that *Tomb Raider 3* was released during the holidays, too, and it's incredible how well *Angel of Darkness* is performing."

The game has come under fire for just about everything, but are the reviewers just being too picky?

> **"From Ah-nold and Angelina, all the way to Zion, Hollywood is dominating buzz and demand for games."**

"We honestly spent a lot of time and money focus testing the game," Dyer says. "But in some instances, such as the controls, Core wasn't able to put the feedback into the final product."

Still, *Angel*'s lousy reviews have prompted plenty of questions regarding the sudden departure of Jeremy Heath-Smith, managing director of Core Design and global development director of Eidos. The company issued a brief statement on July 15, and when pressed further, stated: "the [Eidos] Board believes that now is the right time to make a change. Jeremy has overseen the development process at Core Design for seven years." What does this mean for Core? Business as usual, apparently. "Eidos management are working with Core management to establish the best way forward. Adrian Smith will remain a key member of the Core team," we were told.

ENTER THE MEGABUCKS

With worldwide sales topping 2.5 million units already, the success of Atari's *Enter The Matrix* can't be denied. Like *Tomb Raider*, the game continues to generate a lot of buzz because of its movie tie-in—and it was likewise hammered by the critics. We were quite moderate compared to some, awarding the game three stars last month, and according to Game Rankings, it has averaged scores of 66.4 percent.

When challenged on the the game's mediocre marks, David Perry, president and CEO of *Matrix* developer Shiny Entertainment, told us, "You have to 'free your mind' a little bit, because this game was made for the mass market, not for a writer on a particular website. With those guys, if you're not making another *Quake* game, they're going to be pretty cynical about it. *Half-Life 2* is a great game for them, and this is a game for the mass market." That means you.

Based on the game's sales, he's clearly onto something. But when you push beyond the massive hype surrounding the movie, do consumers actually like the game after they've bought it? "We have unbelievably high ratings from the people who bought the game, not the hardcore reviewers," Perry claims. "Our job is to please people and make them feel they got a good value for their money....You have to decide what you're going for, and we wanted to make a game that was easy and satisfying for the mass market."

Enter The Matrix is such a success that we hear Atari might re-release the game this fall with a renewed marketing campaign to tie it in with the DVD release of *Reloaded* (Oct. 14) and the final movie, *Revolutions* (Nov. 5).

SMASH HITS

This summer is filled with franchises that are performing well both in theaters and on PS2. Universal's *Hulk* hit consoles prior to the movie, just as the buzz was reaching fever pitch. The game was reasonably well received critically, averaging 70.4 percent on Game Rankings (and a respectable four stars from *OPM*) and is sitting at No. 3 on the sales charts this month, behind *Tomb Raider* and *Enter The Matrix*.

In the coming months, we can expect Atari's *Terminator 3*, Ubi Soft's *Charlie's Angels*, and the pièce de résistance, EA's *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*. Will these fare as well as the big summer hits? "The ties between Hollywood and the gaming industry are deepening for a reason," NMS' Snyder tells us. "The excitement and hype factor of Hollywood buzz undoubtedly helps to sell more games."

Illustration by James McHugh

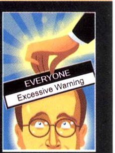
See? Monkeys rule.

EVE IN THE GAME
This is what Eve looks like when she appears in Ubi Soft's *XIII*.

Those Monkeys Are Back!
To *OPM*'s delight (especially Gary's), the monkeys from *Ape Escape* will make a cameo appearance in *Monster Rancher 4*!

THE WATCHDOG

NOTHING TO HIDE



Four years ago, I started a website called GameDad.com, which capitalized on the fact that videogame ratings provided by the ESRB—the E, T, and M ratings we're now all familiar with—weren't actually very useful to parents. While these single-letter ratings let parents know generally about the age appropriateness of games, they didn't explain why a game got the rating it did.

This was significant because most parents, like most human beings, place varying levels of importance on certain activities. One parent may be more concerned about sexually suggestive themes than violence, while another parent might feel exactly opposite. For three years, I played videogames to provide that specific information for parents. It was a pretty sweet gig while it lasted.

But it was actually a good thing that the gig came to an end. The ESRB has just made it obsolete by expanding its ratings classifications to include content descriptors—30 labels that go a long way toward explaining the details of the overall E, T, and M rating a game might receive. Now, all parents have to do is look at the box and they'll receive a more useful thumbnail description of what's going on in the game their kids want to play. Of course, some descriptions will be more thumbnail than others: A ratings box for a game in the *Grand Theft Auto* series could conceivably feature a dozen content descriptors, including "Sexual Violence," "Blood and Gore," and "Use of Drugs." A parent of an 8-year-old who comes up saying, "Mommy! I want *Vice City!*" might just faint after reading the box. And, of course, that's the whole point.

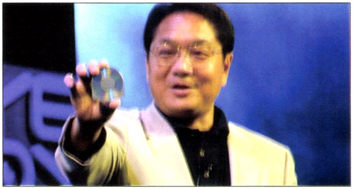
This may cause some griping from the kids who are no longer able to slide a game past the parental goalie. But for these kids, there's the satisfaction of knowing their short-term loss is gaming's long-term gain. A rating system that is actually useful to parents shows to censorious government fiddlers that the videogaming community is going out of its way to keep parents in control of what goes on in their homes. This makes it harder for the government to make those decisions. So it's better for the artistic and legal freedoms of the industry, as well as for the range of games that are available for the rest of us to buy and play.

The revamped ESRB rating system shows that videogames have nothing to hide. This is good news for parents. But in the long run, it'll be even better news for gamers.

Do you think the revamped ratings will be a good thing? Or is Scalzi way off on this one? Bring your thoughts to the *OPM* Message Board at Gamers.com or write to John yourself at john@scalzi.com.

SONY'S PHANTOM GAME SYSTEM

PSP wasn't Sony's first try at launching a handheld system



If you've read *OPM* lately, you know that Sony Computer Entertainment plans to release PSP, a superadvanced handheld system, late next year. But did you know that Sony itself (not the subsidiary Sony Computer Entertainment, which develops almost everything PlayStation-related) had a potential Game Boy killer in the works as early as five years ago? And we're not talking about the crappy PocketStation (see sidebar).

As reported by the Nikkei BP news service, sources from within Sony recently revealed the "ET Project," a completely different handheld system. Set into motion by CEO Nobuyuki Idei and President Kunitake Ando, the system was to be about the same size as a Game Boy Advance and was slated to feature Memory Stick compatibility. Games were to be retrieved by fitting Sticks into designated kiosks at stores. You paid the cost of the game at the kiosk and downloaded the game.

So, why didn't we ever see the result of the ET Project? According to Nikkei's report, SCE President Ken Kuturagi advised Ando in June 2001 that it was a bad move for the company at the time. "We must pour all power into popularizing the PlayStation 2 we just released in March 2000 [in Japan]," he told Sony's president. "The time is too early for a portable system."

Could this have been a cunning move by Kuturagi? Could he have had PSP in the back of his head and not wanted ET to affect his baby?

One Nikkei source suggests a political move, but of a totally different nature. "One core member of [ET Project] was an SCE technician who returned to Sony after getting in a confrontation with Mr. Kuturagi over the development of the portable released [in Japan only] as PocketStation," he says. The source further explains that Kuturagi felt betrayed, since Sony had assigned the responsibility of ET to this mysterious individual, whom he disliked.

Whatever the case, another Nikkei source wonders why Sony didn't seek SCE's help in the first place. "The project wouldn't have been stranded if [they] had worked together on this."

But perhaps the cancellation of the ET Project is a blessing in disguise. Who wants to download their games from a kiosk, anyway?

> **"Perhaps the cancellation of the ET Project may be a blessing in disguise."**

THE OTHER SONY HANDHELD

You may have heard of the ill-fated PocketStation, SCE's answer to the Dreamcast VMU (remember that?). Released only in Japan in November 1998, it basically served as a glorified memory card, with games offering simple graphics on par with those of a Tamagotchi. The only catch: Everything made for it sucked—even *Chocobo World*, downloaded from American copies of *Final Fantasy VIII*.

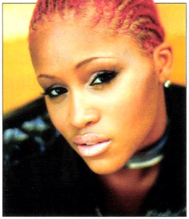
EVE TALKS UP HER NEW ROLE

You know her best as one of the bad girls of rap, but now she's starring as the sexy Major Jones in Ubi Soft's *XIII*. We chat with the self-described "pit bull in a skirt" about what it's like.

How does the script for *XIII* compare to scripts for movies you've read?
I thought I would just come in, do some lines and some sound effects, but I was surprised at the length and depth of *XIII*'s script. *XIII*'s story is extremely captivating, no different from any movie script I've worked on.

What's your favorite thing about playing Major Jones? Is it that she's a tough chick? Or is it the relationship with the main character?
Major Jones is a strong woman who is sexy and independent, she has a compassionate side, but you wouldn't want to go one-on-one with her. She can hold her own. She saves XIII's ass a few times. I like that about her a lot.

If you do another game, what would you want it to be like?
It would be hot for a game to incorporate different scenes from my music videos. It would have a little of everything—action, racing, and of course music. I would have my Ruff Ryder family doing cameos, too!



Eve photo: Corbis/Outline

A New Class of Monkey Catching Madness

George
Most Likely to Be Inquisitive

Punto
Most Likely to Sink the Gondola

Libby
Most Likely to Swim to Ellis Island

Arthur
Most Likely to Get Pierced

Yellow Monkey
Most Likely to Be a Pro Wrestler

Pink Monkey
Most Likely to Be a Pop Star

El Toro
Most Likely to Grab the Bull by the Horns

Harley Q. Win
Most Likely to Annoy the King

Billy
Most Likely to Get a Speeding Ticket

Leo
Most Likely to Catch a Fever

Monko Polo
Most Likely to Find a Legendary Banana

Natalie
Most Likely to Lose Her Wits

Marshall
Most Likely to Punch the Ref

Larry
Most Likely to Step in Monkey Poo

Buzz
Most Likely to Be Lost in Space

Mr. White
Most Likely to Be an Evil Scientist

Stephenson
Most Likely to Walk the Plank

Jimmy
Most Likely to Save the World

Specter
Most Likely to Take Over the World

Cleo
Most Likely to Walk Like an Egyptian

300 monkeys. They're smarter. They're zanier. And they're trying to take over the world.

APE ESCAPE 2™

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Comic Mischief
Mild Violence

PlayStation.2

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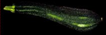
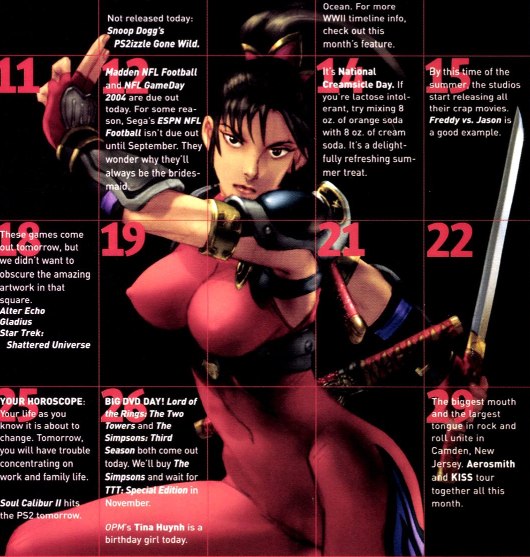
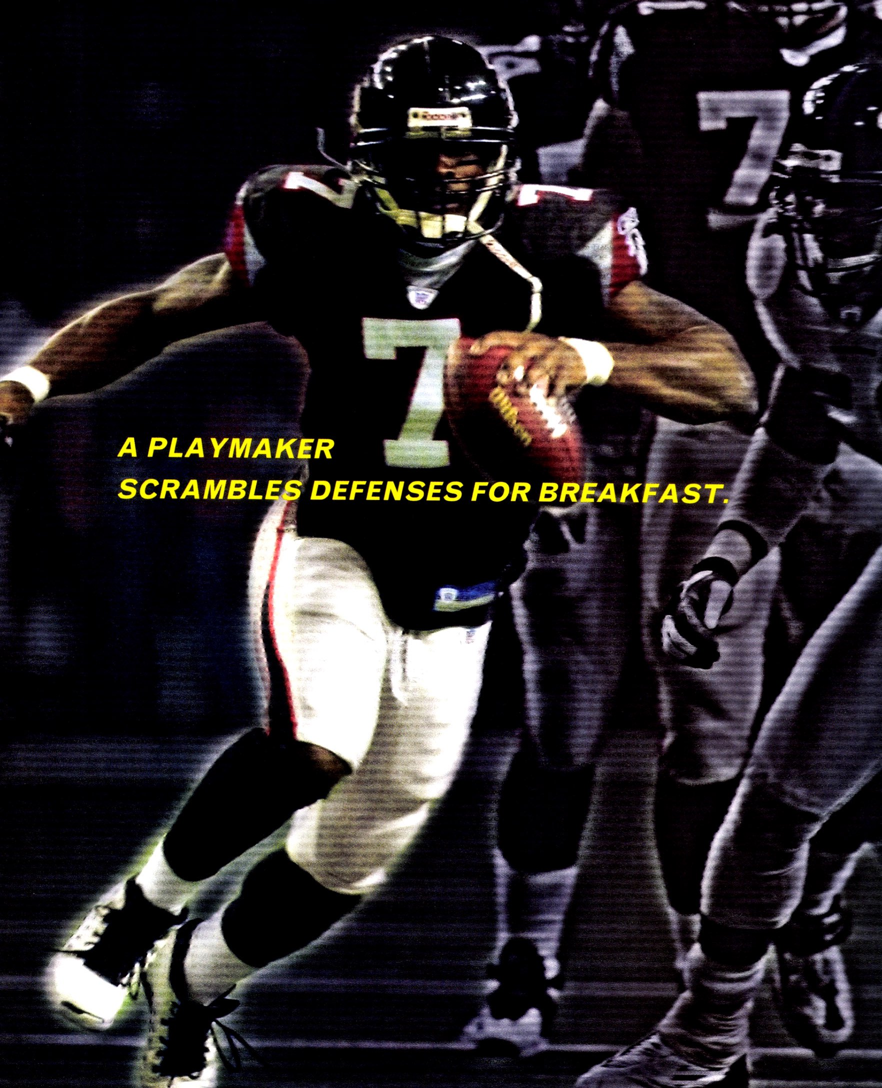
OPM BACK-TO-SCHOOL CHECKLIST
☐ *Madden NFL 2004* ☐ Logitech USB Headset
☐ Online Adaptor ☐ Someone who'll go to class for you

DATEBOOK

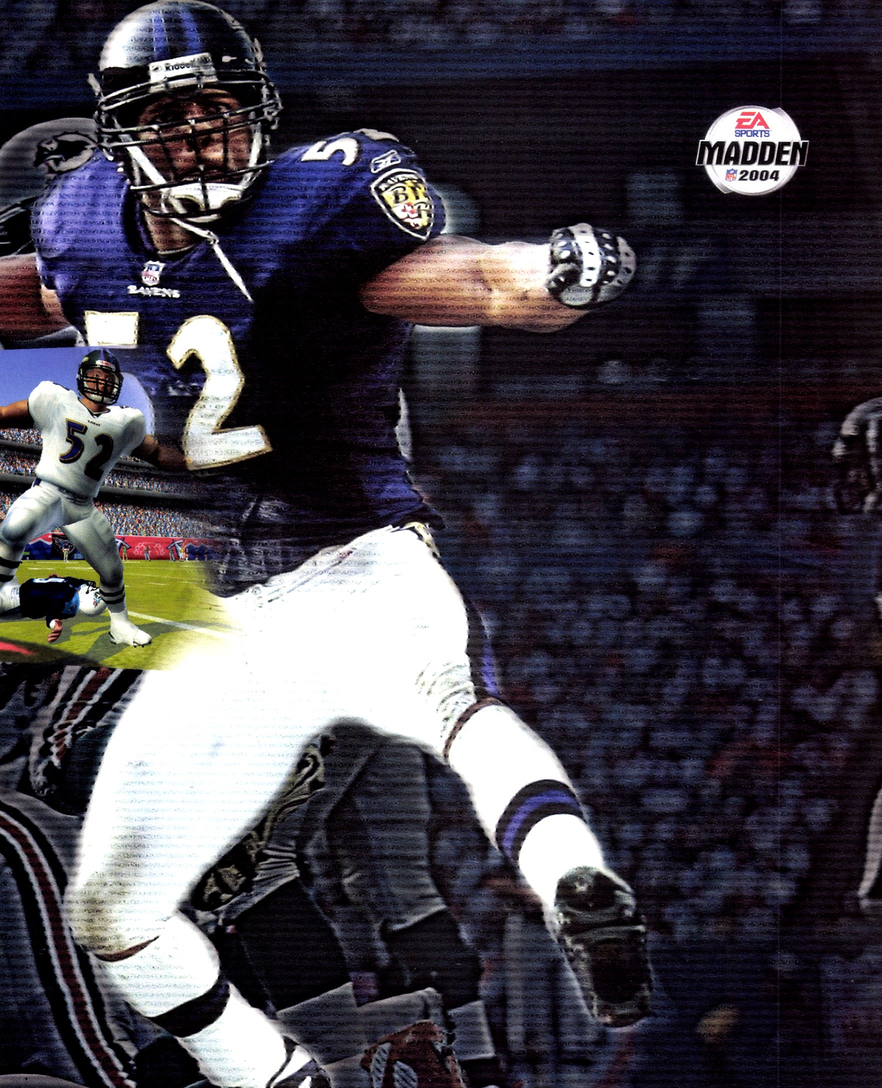
AUGUST 2K3

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Apparently, August is **National Catfish Month**, **Admit You're Happy Month**, and **Romance Awareness Month**. Treat your special lady to a fish fry and tell her how happy you are to be snuggling with her.			Don't get us wrong, we think ***Punk'd*** is great TV, but once upon a time, MTV actually played music videos. In fact, the first one, ***Video Killed the Radio Star***, aired on August 1, 1981.	1 ***American Wedding*** is out now. We lost interest when Shannon Elizabeth declined to do a nude scene in ***American Pie 2***. She doesn't even show up in part three.	
	4	5 **NEW RELEASES** ***Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild*** ***Freaky Flyers*** ***Reel Fishing III*** ***RPG Maker 2*** ***Silent Hill 3*** ***Chaos Legion*** Not released today: ***Snoop Dogg's PS2izzle Gone Wild.***	6 Somebody, somewhere has deemed today **Wiggle Your Toes Day**.	7 On this date in 1942, U.S. Marines landed at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, making the first assault by U.S. troops on Japanese positions in the Pacific Ocean. For more WWII timeline info, check out this month's feature.	8 Can you smell the desperation? Kevin Costner made yet another Western. It's out today. Too bad everyone will be seeing ***S.W.A.T*** with Colin Farrell.	9 Open the front door and check for maggots and rotten produce. Yesterday was **Sneak Some Zucchini Onto Your Neighbor's Porch Day**. 
10 ***2 Fast 2 Furious*** star **Devon Aoki** turns 21 today. *OPM* Art Director **Bob Conlon** also celebrates his birthday, but he's much older than that.	11	12 ***Madden NFL Football*** and ***NFL GameDay 2004*** are due out today. For some reason, Sega's ***ESPN NFL Football*** isn't due out until September. They wonder why they'll always be the bridesmaid.		14 It's **National Creamsicle Day.** If you're lactose intolerant, try mixing 8 oz. of orange soda with 8 oz. of cream soda. It's a delightfully refreshing summer treat.	15 By this time of the summer, the studios start releasing all their crap movies. ***Freddy vs. Jason*** is a good example.	
17 Root for *OPM* friend **Bob Burnquist** in ***X-Games IX*** airing on ESPN now through August 21.	18 These games come out tomorrow, but we didn't want to obscure the amazing artwork in that square. ***Alter Echo*** ***Gladius*** ***Star Trek: Shattered Universe***	19		21	22	23 Ex-NBA champion **Kobe Bryant** turns 25. He's had quite an interesting summer so far.
24/31 Hide the children, Mildred! **Paul "Pee Wee" Reubens** turns 51! 	25 **YOUR HOROSCOPE**: Your life as you know it is about to change. Tomorrow, you will have trouble concentrating on work and family life. ***Soul Calibur II*** hits the PS2 tomorrow.	26 **BIG DVD DAY!** ***Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*** and ***The Simpsons: Third Season*** both come out today. We'll buy ***The Simpsons*** and wait for ***TTT: Special Edition*** in November. *OPM*'s **Tina Huynh** is a birthday girl today.			29 The biggest mouth and the largest tongue in rock and roll unite in Camden, New Jersey. **Aerosmith** and **KISS** tour together all this month.	30 The incredibly delicious **Cameron Diaz** hits the peak age of 31.




A PLAYMAKER
SCRAMBLES DEFENSES FOR BREAKFAST.

CHEWS UP RUNNING BACKS FOR LUNCH.
FLEMISTER
89
SEAHAWKS


EA SPORTS
MADDEN
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RAVENS
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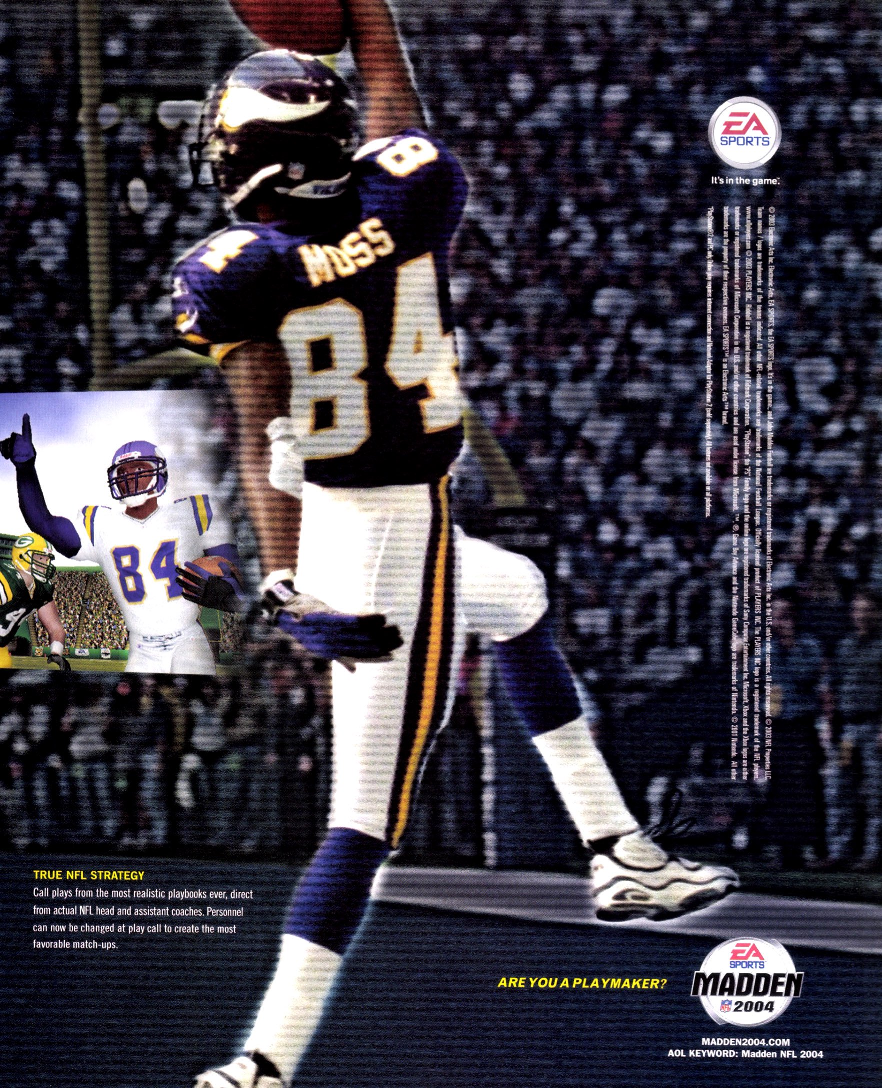

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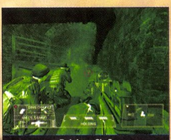
Rainbow Six 3



Rainbow Six 3

Rainbow Six 3

TEAMWORK

It's absolutely required

Unlike *Splinter Cell*, neither *Rainbow Six 3* nor the next *Ghost Recon* is a solo affair. Work with your teammates to accomplish your missions.

BEYOND TOMORROW

In addition to the next Splinter Cell, other Tom Clancy games suddenly have our attention

There was a time—not so long ago, even—when console games based on the universe established by Tom Clancy novels were absolutely negligible. They didn't outright suck (well, most of them, anyway), but Clancy fans with Dreamcasts, PS1s, and even PS2s were usually left scratching their heads, wondering how these games were so lauded on PC.

And then along came *Splinter Cell*. If you've played it (especially on Xbox, we'll admit), you know how great it is. Suddenly, Clancy games matter. And *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow* (see last issue) isn't the only one in the works.

Ghost Recon may not have wowed us last year, but the series' next game just might. Adapting more of a *SOCOM* style of play, the yet-to-be-titled sequel places a heavy emphasis on online action. (Yes, this means you'll get even more use out of that headset.) We hear it borrows quite a bit from the just-released *Ghost Recon: Island Thunder* for Xbox, but with fewer island missions and a whole new experience in Latin America. Right now, it looks like we can expect the game in spring 2004.

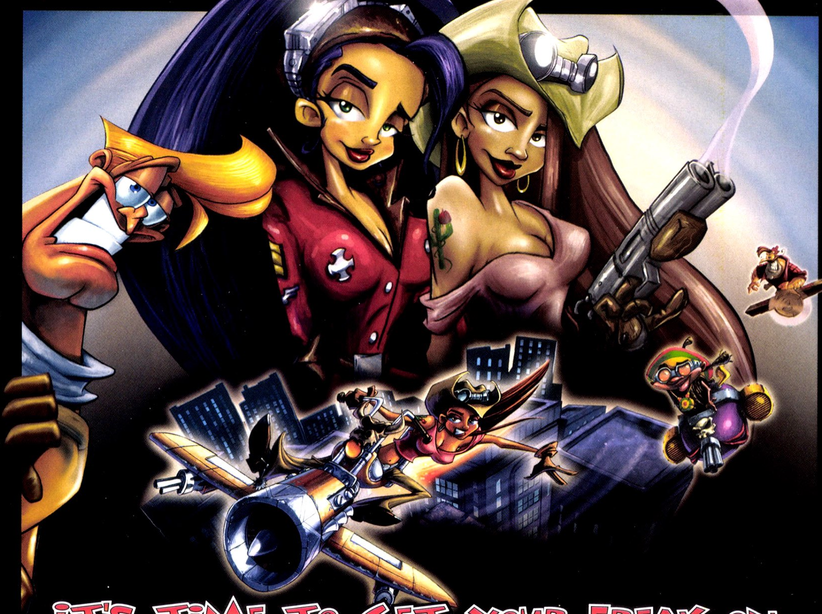
Also coming around the same time is *Rainbow Six 3*. Note that this is not *Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield*, the very well-reviewed PC game released a few months ago. Despite similar core gameplay, the PS2 version features unique missions set in environments only *similar* to those in *Raven Shield*—nothing is identical. The game should look sharp in its use of the *Splinter Cell* engine, and all controls are being specially fine-tuned for the console gamer. You may even remember the game's main character, Domingo "Ding" Chavez, from the movie *Clear and Present Danger*.

Speaking of which, one has to wonder: Has the time come when Clancy games equal the popularity of Clancy movies? Quite possibly!

LIMONES DELICIOSOS
28

Ghost Recon 2 (Title TBD)

MIDWAY



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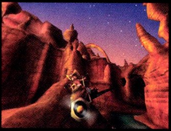

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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Mild Violence
Suggestive Themes

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Check this out for development resources, articles, and tips on openings.

Where PS2 games are made

Ever wondered where games are developed in the United States? Ever dreamed of packing your bags and joining a development studio to finally prove to the world that your ninja sock-puppet action car-based RPG sports shooter really is a good idea? Yes, we have, too. Only our idea is a samurai Hacky Sack adventure on minibikes. Don't tell anyone, though. They'll steal our concepts.

Over the past few months, we've been giving you a look at the world of game development (both in the magazine and on the DVD) and advice on how to get the training you need to get started. This month, we thought we'd help you with the job search. Shown on this handy map are the majority of studios in the United States, along with their phone numbers and URLs. Perhaps there's an opening near you?

PS2
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VIACOM-ONSTROUS! In addition to *Star Trek*, Viacom owns quite a few big-time properties: MTV, Comedy Central, CBS, VH1, TNN, Blockbuster, and Paramount Studios are just a few.

Alone in the Dark with Slater Artisan Entertainment has begun shooting a $20-million *Alone in the Dark* movie. Starring Christian Slater as Edward Carnby, the movie debuts in 2004, along with a new *Dark* game.

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO...?

PLANT MONSTER

BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW

When Kemco held a big press event about a year ago for *Batman: Dark Tomorrow*, the game looked set to offer a solid Dark Knight adventure. Based on the DC comic book (not the animated series or movies), its story was written by actual *Batman* scribe Scott Peterson and involved everyone from the Joker and Mr. Freeze to less traditional villains like Zsasz and Ra's al Ghul. Batfans were frothing.

In March, the game was finally released for Xbox and GameCube, with the behind-in-development PS2 version pushed back a few months. But the frothing stopped as the reviews rolled in (most of them late, since Kemco didn't send out review copies until after the game's release—never a good sign).

"*Dark Tomorrow* is, in a word, abigheapingpileoffeces," declared Evan Shamoon of *XBN*. "It's sloppy, scattered, and illustrates the word 'janky' better than any dictionary ever could."

"It's ultimately dragged down by erratic control, sloppy design, and wildly jarring changes in camera angle," agreed *Official Xbox Magazine*.

GamePro's Tokyo Drifter (his birth name?) felt it was, "without a doubt, the worst Batman game ever...(worse than) even the Game.com *Batman*."

The game's crappiness even inspired *Electronic Gaming Monthly* to create its Shame of the Month award. "It's not just regular bad," said reviewer Joe Fielder, whose 2.0 out of 10 was the highest of the magazine's three scores, "it's *super* bad." Greg Sewart graced the game with a 1.0, saying, "I think this is the most unplayable game I've ever encountered...and I've played some real crap." Greg Ford (1.5) chimed in with, "I got more satisfaction out of cleaning my bathroom on the day I started *Dark Tomorrow* than I did playing this early contender for the year's worst game." And that man *hates* cleaning his bathroom.

So, have you figured out yet that we're not getting a PS2 version? Here's Kemco's official statement on the matter: "At Kemco, we are looking to publish only the highest-quality games for consumers. *Batman: Dark Tomorrow* PS2 was not living up to that standard, so we chose to cancel the project."

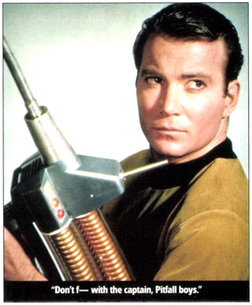
Does that mean the Xbox and GC versions were of the "highest quality" and "up to standard"? Scary!

TREKKED TO COURT

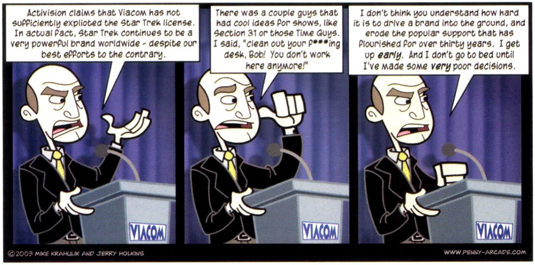
Activision sues Viacom

Claiming that *Star Trek* rights-owner Viacom has not offered enough "product exploitation and support" for its classic sci-fi property, Activision has beamed up a breach of contract suit against the multimedia conglomerate. "Through its actions and inactions, Viacom has let the once proud *Star Trek* franchise stagnate and decay," whined the Santa Monica-based publisher in a July 1 press release. "A continuing pipeline of movie and television production, and related marketing, is absolutely crucial to the success of videogames based on a property such as *Star Trek*."

"*Star Trek* continues to enjoy widespread popularity," countered a rightfully pissed (yet civil) Viacom the following day. "Activision's claims in its filings are manifestly unfounded."



"Don't f— with the captain, Pitfall boys."


Activision claims that Viacom has not sufficiently exploited the Star Trek license. In actual fact, Star Trek continues to be a very powerful brand worldwide - despite our best efforts to the contrary.
There was a couple guys that had cool ideas for shows, like Section 31 or those Time Guys. I said, "clean out your f***ing desk, Bob! You don't work here anymore!"
I don't think you understand how hard it is to drive a brand into the ground, and erode the popular support that has flourished for over thirty years. I get up early. And I don't go to bed until I've made some very poor decisions.
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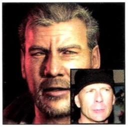
DREAM CAST

The *Silent Hill* series has creeped us out so many times now as a videogame, we think it's fair to say that the time has come for a big-screen version. So, who would we cast if, say, the latest installment of the franchise were to debut at a theater near you? Our choices lie below. See if you agree, and tell us what you think.

Got any ideas for a Dream Cast of your own for another game? Send them to us at opm@ziffdavis.com *with the subject DREAM CAST.*

Heather: Elisha Cuthbert
As Kim Bauer on *24*, Elisha's involved in the show's most absurd plot lines. She does, however, make the most of it by knowing how to look sexy in the face of danger.

Claudia: Chloë Sevigny
You think *Silent Hill 3* is creepy? Chloë was in *Kids* a few years ago—totally scary in a different way. She also has the stoic look down pat, much like Claudia.



Douglas: Bruce Willis
Douglas is about the closest thing to an ally Heather comes across in *Silent Hill 3*. Just apply some makeup to baldy Bruce and she's got John McClane with her.

Vincent: Crispin Glover
He may not totally look the part, but the weird dude in *Willard* and *Charlie's Angels* certainly gives off the Vincent vibe. Not someone you'd wanna meet.

photos: Willis, wireimage.com; Shatner, Corbis

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TEEN
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Violence
Suggestive Themes

PlayStation®2

BATTLE FOR BIKINI BOTTOM

The PS2 *SpongeBob* game has more in common with something like *Spyro* or *Crash* than with the previous games, which were aimed square(pants)ly at kids.

7 SPONGEFACTS

The seventh sexiest man in the world, apparently

You may be wondering why you're looking at a big yellow page featuring a giant picture of SpongeBob SquarePants. Surely it's a kids' show (and a kids' game), isn't it? Why would any self-respecting PlayStation gamer want to know anything about a stupid show on Nickelodeon? Why? Because it's not stupid and it's not just for kids...and because, after we did some research, we learned that SpongeBob is actually one of the most surprising pop-culture phenomena ever. *SpongeBob SquarePants: SuperSponge* for PS1 was a huge hit, and *Revenge of the Flying Dutchman* for PS2 also sold hundreds of thousands of units. SpongeBob's next PS2 game, *Battle for Bikini Bottom*, is aimed at more than just kids—it's a cool platform game designed to appeal to real fans...of which there are many. Check out these SpongeFacts.

1. More than 3 million copies of *SpongeBob* games have been sold since 2001, generating more than $80 million.
2. *SpongeBob* merchandise is expected to reach $500 million in retail sales this year. Items range from sleepwear for kids to thong underwear for adults.
3. Mattel's Babbling SpongeBob doll sells 75,000 units every week. This makes it more popular than the Tickle Me Elmo doll at its popularity peak.
4. SpongeBob was ranked by *Us Weekly* magazine as the seventh sexiest man in the world.
5. Dr. Dre, Sigourney Weaver, Lance Bass, Will Ferrell, Jack Black, Jon Stewart, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Bruce Willis, Jackie Chan, and Dennis Miller are all self-confessed *SpongeBob* fans.
6. Music.com's *SpongeBob* promotion in 2000, aimed at its college audience, was its most successful sweepstakes ever, proving more popular than a similar promotion for *South Park*.
7. *SpongeBob* adult loungewear and boxer shorts are the No. 1-selling property in the character/novelty loungewear category in the United States. Ladies love the Sponge.

FORGOTTEN GEM: THOUSAND ARMS

Long before *Chu-lip*, PS1 RPG *Thousand Arms* offered gameplay with a similar twist: Your abilities develop depending on your prowess with the ladies.

BULLET TIME

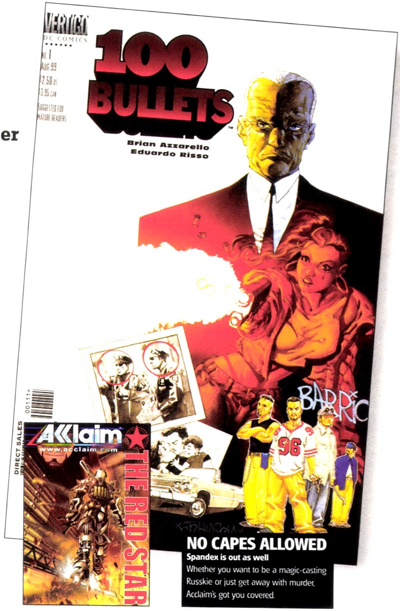
Acclaim nabs comic thriller

What would you do if a man in a sharp suit offered you an attaché case filled with: irrefutable proof of someone seriously screwing with your life, a gun, 100 untraceable bullets—and total carte blanche to off said person? No, this isn't some slick new cheat for *GTA: Vice City*; it's the basic premise for one of Acclaim's new comic book licenses, *100 Bullets*.

100 Bullets started as a series of gritty morality plays; the mysterious Agent Graves hands out said briefcase to different people and observes them afterward. But it quickly developed into an intricate conspiracy-theory thriller that'd make *Metal Gear* fans' brains melt when trying to figure it all out, linking such heavy topics as the Kennedy assassination, hypnotic triggers, prison, and England's first attempt to colonize America in 1585.

Acclaim also picked up *The Red Star* comic license. *The Red Star* is an indie book about a new type of Russian Revolution—one where magic and technology join forces to unleash action-packed, revolution-style mayhem. You've got your evil despot, your sorceresses in tanks, and your dead heroes reborn, all duking it out in Mother Russia.

Acclaim Austin (*Vexx*, *Turok* series) will be handling both games. Since *The Red Star* features tons of slick-looking vehicles and snazzy spells, it could easily become an action-packed shooter, while *100 Bullets*—with its emphasis on conspiracies and scheming characters—seems better suited for a grittier, more cinematic adventure game, like a *Metal Gear Solid* or a *Devil May Cry* kinda deal. Expect both games in 2004.



NO CAPES ALLOWED

Spandex is out as well

Whether you want to be a magic-casting Russkie or just get away with murder, Acclaim's got you covered.

DATA STREAM

Holy SmackDown!

THQ has finally revealed its new *SmackDown!* game for the PS2. Look forward to improved graphics, new story lines, and, most important, the bra-and-panties matches when it hits this fall.

Beastie Brawling

From the team bringing you *Resident Evil Online* comes Capcom's *Monster Hunter*. Four people team up online to hunt down massive monsters. Expect it sometime next year.

Dragon Bore-ier

Proving that Japanese gamers will buy anything with *Dragon Quest* (*Dragon Warrior* to us) on it, Square Enix will release a new toy/game that allows people to play a *Dragon Quest* game with this sword peripheral. It's never coming here.

Plant One on Me

How we missed this for "Only in Japan," we don't know. But thank goodness we did, since it's coming here! Natsume is bringing over *Chu-lip*, the first ever kissing RPG, this fall. Yes, it's an RPG in which you go around kissing everyone.

SNK BACK FROM THE DEAD

About two years ago, we reported that SNK, a favored company of hardcore gamers, had closed its doors due to bankruptcy. That's not the case anymore...well, sort of.

Now that a Korean company called Playmore has purchased the SNK name and all its assets, SNK isn't exactly what it used to be. However, the name is back in use (the American branch is known as SNK Neo-Geo USA), and the company has announced a few games to be released in the coming months.

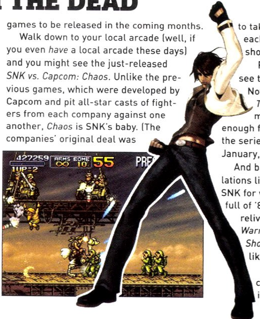
Walk down to your local arcade (well, if you even *have* a local arcade these days) and you might see the just-released *SNK vs. Capcom: Chaos*. Unlike the previous games, which were developed by Capcom and pit all-star casts of fighters from each company against one another, *Chaos* is SNK's baby. (The companies' original deal was to take turns releasing games using each others' characters.) A PS2 version should hit sometime next year.

Pending Sony approval, we should see the shoot-em-up *Metal Slug 3* this November, plus a two-pack featuring *The King of Fighters 2000* and *2001* a month beforehand. As if that weren't enough for *King* fans, the first 3D version of the series is on schedule for release come January, followed by *King 2002* in April.

And based on the success of PS1 compilations like *Namco Museum*, can we blame SNK for wanting to release a similar title full of '80s classics? Who wouldn't want to relive the likes of *Baseball Stars*, *Ikari Warriors*, *Fatal Fury*, and *Samurai Shodown*? We might get something like that at some point.

It's nice to see such an important company in gaming history back on its feet again. Huzzah!

42
PRESS START
KYO
JHUN CHOI
LEONA CLARK
KRIZALID
RALF



CLIFFHANGER When last we left Garner's Agent Sydn
Bristow, she fought her evil roommate to the death, collapsed
exhaustion, and awoke two years later, in Hong Kon

YOUNG. FEMALE. DEADLY.

Move over, Snake and Sam! Sydney's coming in November

Fans of the delectable Jennifer Garner as ass-kicking superspy Sydney Bristow in ABC's hit series *Alias* will be pleased to know that the game based on the show, due this November, appears set to expand on the story line established so far. Acclaim has secured the talents of all the show's primary cast members to provide voice work, and the participation of the show's writers and producers ensures that the experience is as authentic as possible.

"While we were told the entire story for season two back when they'd only filmed a few episodes," says James Sheahan, brand manager for *Alias* at Acclaim, "the events of the next season are so secret right now that even we don't know what happens next. Sadly, there are no hints at season three in the game. However, when the story for the game was written (by Ana Mars, Acclaim game designer, and Breen Frazier, *Alias* scriptwriter), elements and characters from the game were included in episodes of season two of the show. But by the time the game comes out, these episodes will have aired, so fans will already be aware of these items. Also, the game does explain where Anna Espinosa [who went head-to-head with Sydney in the first season] went and what happens to her."

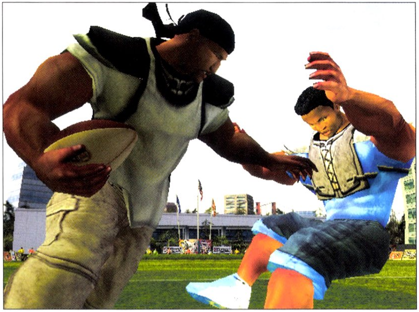
We recently got an exclusive look at an early playable version of the game and came away pleasantly surprised. Immediate impressions are that it has an awful lot in common with *Splinter Cell*; the vibe is quite similar, and the graphical style owes a lot to Ubi Soft's recent hit. Where *Alias* will differ is in the combat system, which is much more biased toward Sydney's ass-kicking kung fu style. Also, expect the trademark disguises (including that natty little silver number she sported in season two, complete with sparkly wig; we're holding out hope for the tight blue rubber outfit, too) to play a big part in the game's stealth elements.

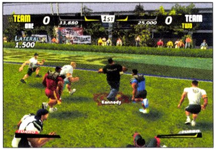
VISIT THE ALIAS SET!

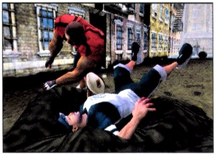
ENTER TO WIN! YOUR CHANCE TO GET ALIASED UP!

Just answer five questions online! Test your *Alias* knowledge for a chance to win cool prizes like the first season of *Alias* on DVD, the game, or (and here's the exciting grand prize!) a trip for two to the set of the show. Enter on the Web at http://alias.playstationmagazine.com

17–47 The Detroit Lions record since Barry Sanders retired just before the 1999 season.







NFL GOES STREET

Football gets the Big treatment

Hoping to capture *NBA Street*'s mix of action and attitude on an asphalt gridiron, EA has announced *NFL Street*, a 7-on-7 street-football game featuring licensed NFL stars.

Madden NFL developer Tiburon is taking a break from its usual focus on obsessive simulation detail. *NFL Street* favors arcade-style action with no helmets, no penalties, no punting, and showstopping big plays. Its trick system is adapted from *NBA Street*'s, in which a series of special moves combine to build up a Gamebreaker meter, culminating in plays that can shift the balance of a game.

NFL Street won't have the entire NFL roster on offer, but it will include 300 licensed stars from all 32 teams. Today's players appear alongside retired legends—Barry Sanders will be one of the game's cover stars (EA brought him out to promote the game's debut, alongside Ray Lewis of the Ravens), and he'll be joined by other notable names. You can also create your own players by customizing their appearances and accessories, then build them up by earning points in the NFL Challenge mode. Along the way, unlockable items range from extra accessories to special player upgrades.

Like *NBA Street*, *NFL*'s environments run the urban gamut from vacant lots to playground fields to the streets themselves. In a new twist, though, the nature of the terrain affects gameplay—playing on the blacktop demands different skills compared with playing on the sandlot. To suit the settings, EA plans to sign up musicians for a soundtrack featuring the latest in rock and hip-hop.

Four-player support is a given on all three consoles, but as usual with EA's games, PlayStation 2 gamers get the best deal—online play will be available only on our system. *–Dave Smith*

ULTIMATE GAMING GIRL

It takes a lot to get some respect as a girl in gaming. And it takes even more to be the ultimate girl. With this in mind, we took a look at some of the PS2's finest ladies. Looks like Lara raided the top spot. Don't agree? E-mail us and tell us why at opm@ziffdavis.com.

Characteristic	**LARA CROFT** Tomb Raider	**BAR WENCH** Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	**RIKKU** Final Fantasy X-2	**JADE** Beyond Good & Evil	**TAKI** Soul Calibur II	**IVY** Soul Calibur II	**ELISE** SSX Tricky	**SARAH** Virtua Fighter 4	**VIKKI** Army Men
Beauty	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brains	✓		✓	✓					
Multiple outfits	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Broken nail? No problem!	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Kicks ass, big time	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	
Bendy	✓				✓	✓		✓	
Can handle a weapon or two	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Doesn't need silicone	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Made of plastic									✓
TOTALS	8	1	4	5	7	7	4	6	4

DATA STREAM

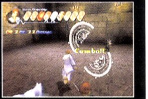
Some More Payne

Rockstar has revealed the sequel to *Max Payne*. Titled *Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne*, the game will boast a new visual style and is being dubbed a "film noir love story." Look for it to hit PS2 sometime next year.

Harry's Roots

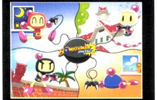
EA will release a new *Harry Potter* game for PS2 this fall, this one based on the original book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The good news is, it's an all new game and plays similarly to last year's *The Chamber of Secrets*.

Change of Heart



Aruze has revealed *Shadow Hearts 2* for PS2. Now accomplished entirely with 3D graphics, the game takes place six months after the original and stars a new pair of heroes, Nichol and Karen.

Bombs Away!



Hudson is currently beta testing *Bomberman Online* for PS2 in Japan. It allows eight players to go at it over the Net. If there's one online game that needs to come here, this is it!

HANGING WITH HEF
Bob recently spent a day filming a commercial for X-Games IX using Hugh Hefner's Playboy Mansion pool as a skate park.

WHAT ABOUT BOB?

Bob Burnquist rejoins his pal Tony Hawk in THUG

He stepped out of *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* to be the center of attention in Konami's ill-fated *ESPN X Games Skateboarding*, but returned for Tony's fourth game and his upcoming fifth title, *Underground*. Bob Burnquist is regarded as one of the most innovative and progressive skaters around and is heralded for his death-defying stunts and business acumen (he runs two companies, Burnquist Organics and Melodia). We caught up with him to talk about skating, games, and *Tony Hawk's Underground*.

> **"The tricks are exaggerated but possible. Some are just impossible, but that's part of how much fun the game is."**

Have you played every game in the series? If so, do you play as yourself? If not, who are your favorite skaters to play?
I've played pretty much every game that's come out...some more than others. And yes, I usually pick myself as a character. For the development of the game, we want to make sure that the tricks and the style our character is doing fit into what we actually do. I've played with only a few different characters, and it's usually Koston or Tony.

Was it weird going to *ESPN X Games Skateboarding* after being in the first two *Tony Hawk* games, then returning to Activision's series for *Tony 4*?
No, it wasn't weird at all. It was just what I felt like doing at the time. It gave me a little more exposure, and then I came back under Activision's wing with a more solid deal. Activision is the strongest when it comes to skateboarding games, so it made total sense to partner up.

What's your favorite skating environment ever portrayed in a *Tony Hawk* game? What makes it so cool?
When *THPS2* came out, I was stoked to be able to skate Marseille skatepark in France in the game. It had been my favorite place to skate for so long, so when I got to play it in virtual reality, it was like I just went back there for a session. I still have a lot more fun skating the spots for real, but when it comes to a quick Marseille fix, *THPS2* is perfect.

What's the hottest real-life skate spot in the world?
My backyard.

How did you become a pro skater? Can we follow your career path in *THUG*?
It was a gradual thing. One thing led to the next and before I knew it, I was getting paid to skate. Turning pro wasn't a big formality—it was actually kind of funny. I skated a couple open pro/am contests in Brazil and qualified in the first one. In the second one, I just told the announcer that I was pro now. He announced it just as we were getting ready to go on to the finals. I got nervous and bailed my tricks. I ended up in seventh place.

How accurate is the portrayal of a skater's life in *THUG*?
It's just a little taste of it. The tricks are exaggerated but possible. Some are just completely impossible, but that's part of how much fun the game is.

What are you most looking forward to in *THUG*?
What I always look forward to in the new games: new crazy spots, ease of play, and not too much waiting around. *THPS4* did an amazing job at keeping the game flow going. In this case, I'm looking forward to the Story mode. It's a whole new way of playing the game.

When will the player meet you in *THUG*, and what will your exact role be?
We're all going to have to wait and get the game to find out. It's going to be ONE FUN GAME!

So, Tony gets all the glory, having his 900 and all. Do you plan to carry out any revolutionary moves of that caliber at some point in the next few years? Any chance you could let us in on it?
Of course Tony gets all the glory, it's his game and he deserves it! As far as big moves, I've had a few, and there are a lot more I want to do. I don't really know what I'm doing until a month or two before I actually do it. Sometimes, I don't even know what I'm going to do tomorrow. It's a matter of dreaming it, then believing in it, and then finally going for it and just doing it.

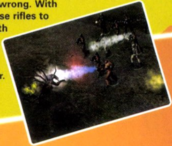
Now, for something completely different.

NOT YOUR ORDINARY GAME

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

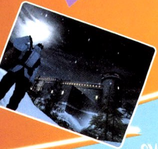
ALIENS VS. PREDATOR: EXTINCTION PS2, XBX

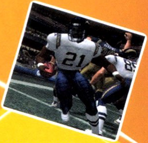
Most titles these days feature one race, one group of weapons, and one planet. Aliens vs. Predator: Extinction, however, lets you control an Alien Hive, order a Predator Clan, or lead a crack squad of Colonial Marines. The goal? Nothing short of interplanetary survival. Each race has seven levels swarming with enemies that must be eradicated to be considered defeated. Each has its own characteristics and different styles of play. Want to go in guns blazing? Want to sneak up with Optical Camouflage and slice throats from behind? Or do you want to just overwhelm your foes by sheer numbers? Aliens vs. Predator: Extinction features 10 different unit types per race, including the never-before-seen Predator Hydra and Alien Ravager. What can they do? We could tell you, but then we'd have to kill you. There are 21 unique maps, ranging from what you'd expect of the movies: humid jungles, barren deserts, and high-tech laboratories where experiments went horribly wrong. With weaponry ranging from pulse rifles to exosuits, airstrikes and tooth and claw, Aliens vs. Predator has enough action to satisfy anyone's hunger.



BREAK OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Nestle
Butterfinger
bar





SWEET CODES

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

JAMES BOND 007 NIGHTFIRE PS2, XBX, GC

SECRET CODES

The following codes must be entered at the Passcode screen:

Unlock all multiplayer scenarios: GAMEROOM
Demolition mode: TNT
GoldenEye Strike mode: ORBIT
Protect mode: GUARDIAN
Uplink mode: TRANSMIT
Assassination mode: SCOPE

UNLOCK MULTIPLAYER CHARACTERS

Jaws: DENTAL
Oddjob: BOWLER
Xenia: JANUS
Goldfinger: MIDAS
Tuxedo Bond: BLACKTIE
Unlock all: PARTY

UNLOCK STAGES

Alpine Escape: POWDER
Double Cross: BONSAI
Night Shift: HIGHRISE
Chain Reaction: MELTDOWN
Phoenix Fire: FLAME
Deep Descent: AQUA
Island Infiltration: PARADISE
Countdown: BLASTOFF
Equinox: VACUUM

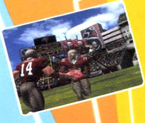
EXTRA UNLOCKABLES

Get all upgrades: Q LAB
Laser upgrade: PHOTON
Upgrade missiles: LAUNCH
Extra sniper ammo: MAGAZINE
Explosive scenery: BOOM

BREAK OUT TRICKS

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NFL BLITZ PRO PS2, XBX, GC



Like playing the all new and improved Blitz, but still long for the days of old? Worry no more—with only 10,000 credits, you can turn to the Blitz Shop and buy Blitz Classic and have the best of both worlds.

- Tired of doing an octopus impersonation when you have to pile in a bunch of codes at the loading screen? Buy the Butterfingaz Secret Game Mode in the Blitz Shop for 50,000 credits to play the mode that only the Blitz coders knew about!
- If you like the matchup of David Vs Goliath, you can play with three-inch dwarves versus 30-foot giants in a battle of speed versus brawn for 100,000 credits!

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DARE TO LOG ON TO BUTTERFINGER.COM

Un jeu
Français avec
des porcs.

LETTERBOX
The whole game is presented in widescreen, but why? "I want people to focus on what's important, because our eyes are more like that [than square]."

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

Seven things you should know about Ubi Soft's gorgeous game

IT'S ABOUT A CONSPIRACY

"The contrast between appearance and reality is the main theme," says Michel Ancel, the game's creator. "It's set in a futuristic world, and the heroine is a freelance reporter recruited by a rebel organization to investigate an alleged conspiracy. The fact that people can be influenced and controlled by media, propaganda, and other individuals also plays into this theme. In the game, the government of Hyllis uses propaganda to control and instill fear in its people."

IT'S SINISTER

The theme of the game is more sinister than you'd expect—it's actually something of a metaphor for the way governments manipulate through propaganda. "Players need to investigate beyond the superficial facts of what is good and what is evil," Ancel explains. "The contrast between appearance and reality is also manifested in the side character Pey'j, a piglike beast who is actually very trustworthy and helpful."

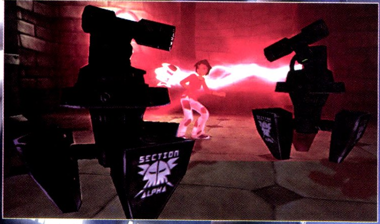
IT'S NOT A COLLECTING GAME

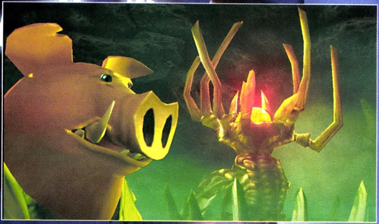
Most 3D action games, like *Jak and Daxter* or *Ratchet & Clank*, are driven very much by the need to collect objects. "*Beyond Good & Evil* is special because it is a very story-line-driven game," Ancel explains. "Unlike in other action-adventure games, the objectives do not revolve around the search for abstract objects. The player has a much more involved task of uncovering a conspiracy and spearheading a revolution. To achieve these objectives, players must infiltrate highly secured locations in hopes of capturing evidence that will expose the conspiracy.

"We also use Pey'j to reinforce the story line," Ancel tells us. "If a player is about to encounter a dangerous situation, Pey'j will sense the danger and give you vital information. This interaction exists throughout the game. If you're captured, Pey'j can save you, and you help him in return. You also learn more about the story line through conversations with him. As a result, a [illegible] connection grows between the two

TONIC TROUBLE

Everyone loves the *Rayman* games, but do you remember Michel Ancel's less popular *Tonic Trouble*? Check out www.tonictrouble.com.





characters. When he's kidnapped in front of your eyes, you actually feel something about that."

JADE IS LIKE A REAL WOMAN

Jade is far from the stereotypical videogame heroine. "We wanted to create a character, a persona, and a real person," Ancel admits. "I've got nothing against sexy action women, but with Jade, the question was more about her role, her situation in the world, and the meaning of her quest as opposed to the size of her breasts," he quips. "She evolved a lot during the development of the game, visually and psychologically."

HER JOB IS IMPORTANT

"The photojournalism is the most important part of the game," Ancel explains. "Jade must rely on her reporting skills to capture and document the truth of exactly what is happening on the planet of Hyllis. She uses these photographs to expose the conspiracy and convince the people of Hyllis to join the revolution against the organizations controlling the world with their propaganda. The convinced people then offer money and objects that help the player continue reporting. Jade emerges as the last hope to save humankind."

HER UNCLE IS A PIG—LITERALLY

"Pey'j is Jade's adoptive uncle, but he's not the typically cute uncle you would expect in a child's story. He likes to read sex magazines, he smokes big Cuban cigars, and he'll fight you for the last beer in the Akuda Bar, a pub in Hyllis," Ancel laughs. "Pey'j and Jade are a bit like Beauty and the Beast, but more contemporary. We wanted a contrasting duo to increase the dynamic between the two. What's funny is that, despite their differences, they work together perfectly. Pey'j is a mechanic who relies on his size and strength, while Jade is petite and can sneak through tight spaces. The cooperation between the two also comes into play during fighting sequences; players can give Pey'j instructions to assist Jade."

IT'S MORE THAN JUST AN ACTION GAME

The game isn't all running around and jumping over things, nor is it all sneaking around stealthily like Snake or Sam Fisher. These elements are incorporated, but the game also features puzzles, driving sections, and combat. "It took a really long time to make the various types of gameplay compatible with each other," Ancel concedes. "The controls had to be natural, the gameplay had to connect logically, and the balancing between these two was difficult to manage. We realized that the best way to achieve this was to make all the gameplay [elements] compatible. That way, the possible solutions increased exponentially. The process involved a lot of trial and error—finding the right rules and then testing them, testing them, and testing them again."

OCTOBER 2003.
IT'S COMING.
FF:U
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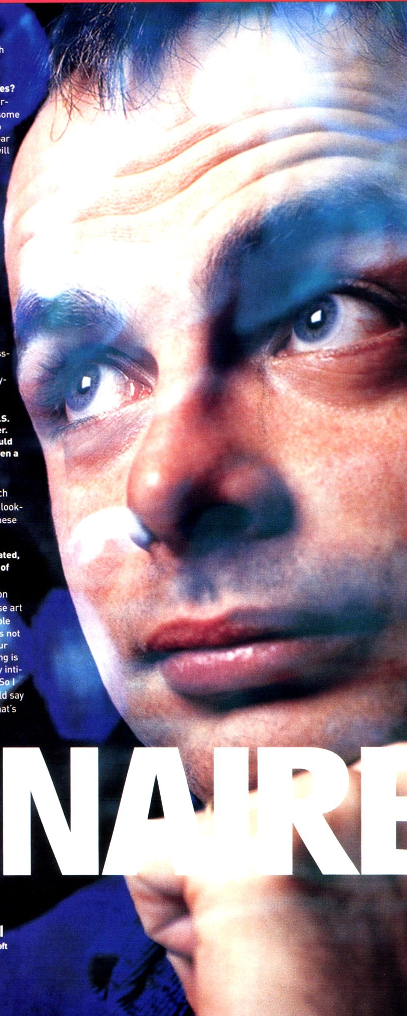
Les porcs
sont vos amis.

http://beyondgoodevil.com
Check this out to see what all the fuss is about.

VISIONNAIRE



He's been described by some as the Miyamoto of France, but are you familiar with Michel Ancel? His most famous creation, *Rayman*, is much more successful than you'd expect, having sold millions of copies worldwide. His latest epic, *Beyond Good & Evil*, is an ambitious project that caught everyone's attention when it was unveiled at E3 a year ago. The project has since turned into one of the most impressive PS2 games currently in development. Ancel took some time out of his crazy schedule to clue us in on his thinking.

Do you have a central philosophy for your game design?
Let the game *play*. Clearly, the game must create the game. As a developer, it's incredibly rewarding to see a player doing unexpected and interesting things. Simple game rules that yield complex gameplay are gold for game developers (*Tetris* is the perfect example of this). We learned a lot while working on *BG&E*, and it's always related to this simple principle.

> **"We're thinking too much as gamers and not enough as entertainers."**

Any advice for aspiring game designers?
We are the second generation of game developers. Miyamoto is the first, and I'm convinced that it's just the beginning of a long story. Today's developers are the pioneers of an entertainment genre that is still very young—we still have a long way to go.

If you could make a game without worrying at all about sales, what would it be?
A game based on the communication between people. I'd like to explore the use of a virtual world in a way that's different than just fighting or sharing powerful boots or items. I'm sure we're using only 10 percent of the potential for games. If we can tap into 10 more percent, we can double the number of people who are attracted to the experience. We're thinking too much as gamers and not enough as *entertainers*.

If you weren't in game design, what would you be doing? Making movies?
With *Rayman*, we had contact with Hollywood people about making movies, TV series...all these things. But to me, the things we can do with videogames are incredible; I prefer working [in this industry]. I think I'd have done something different from virtual things or entertainment. I think I'd have been a teacher. The contact with people and children is very important for me.

Is there a central theme that unites your games?
We always try to add surprise to games; we surprise people by mixing things they know with some very strange things. In all our games, we try to make strange creatures and other things appear so that the player doesn't know exactly what will happen next. When you already know what's going to happen in the story or what kind of creature you will meet next, you won't enjoy that feeling of surprise.

Speaking of surprise, did the success of your *Rayman* games surprise you at all?
It was very surprising. Behind the Rayman character, you have an immersive, surreal world backed up by compelling gameplay and content. The first *Rayman* told us that a successful game depends not only on positioning, but also on the depth of the gameplay—which players will appreciate in the end.

You can often tell the difference between a U.S. game designer and a Japanese game designer. But your games look different from both. Would you say that your vision has a European or even a French feel to it?
To be honest, I wouldn't say French culture. Sometimes we are a bit unclear on what French culture actually is. When I was younger, I was looking at *Indiana Jones* and I was looking at Japanese movies and comics.

But if you look at some of the worlds you created, they do look different from those coming out of the United States or Japan.
I think for me, it's a mix. I think it's a connection between these two worlds. You know, Japanese art is sometimes very bizarre, and American people are doing such impressive things. Hollywood is not dead—it's still there. It's incredibly there. In our game worlds, we have chases where everything is exploding. And at the same time, we have very intimate sequences and very bizarre sequences. So I think we are doing a very natural mix. We could say we are doing very typical French things, but that's not being very honest.

Michel Ancel
Game Creator, Ubi Soft
Career Highlights:
Rayman, Rayman 2

New Original Resident Evil
ON PlayStation®2

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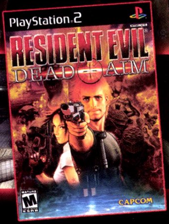

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PlayStation®2

GUNCON2

MATURE M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood and Gore
Violence

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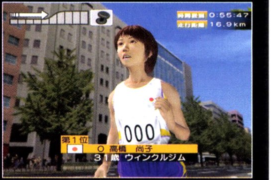
ONLY IN JAPAN



LET'S DO A MARATHON

The Olympics have a habit of making heroes out of stars from dull and minor sports. Here in the United States, we celebrate people like gymnist Kerri Strug. In the U.K., they worship Sir Steve Redgrave...a rower.

Japan's Olympic hero is Naoko Takahashi, and her reward for winning gold in the marathon at Sydney three years ago (aside from fame, endorsements, and a gold medal) is her very own game from Taito. Of course, marathons aren't the easiest sport to translate into games, being far too long for a *Track & Field* button-mash and lacking any sort of navigational element to spice up running over 26.2 miles.

So Taito has gone with a different, more creative approach: *Let's Do A Marathon* isn't about running marathons, but rather running a sports club that trains marathon runners. You control every aspect of the process, from finding a suitable base to building your club's facilities (a small dirt track is not likely to impress Ms. Takahashi), and then collect a solid stable of runners.

In a classic case of "if you build it, they will come," your facilities are key to attracting top runners and huge endorsement deals. You can also improve your existing staff with hard training sessions and let them loose on actual marathons throughout Japan.

Now, here's where it gets exciting: While you watch your runners go through their paces on the track in glorious 3D, you grind your analog sticks to encourage them and cheer them on! And, of course, any prize money they earn goes straight to your pocket for the good of the collective (it's a communist thing), so you can train them even harder and build an even more swank club. After all, your final goal is to become filthy rich.

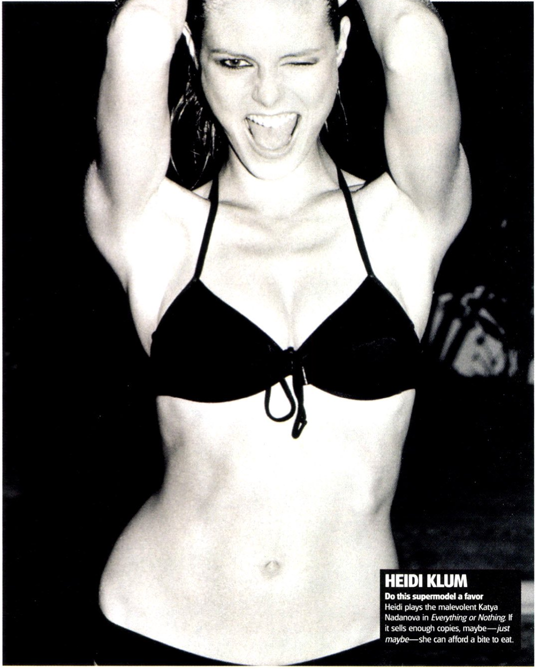
FURTHER BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Derby Stallion (various): Another Japan-only title, this puts you in the fascinating dual role of rich fatcat racehorse owner and manure-encrusted racehorse trainer.

Aerobiz (SNES): Surprisingly compelling airline management sim and totally undeserving of the mocking a place in this list may entail. Hey, Koei! Sequel. Now.

GENESIS
AEROBIZ
SEGA
LEAD YOUR AIRLINE INTO THE FUTURE!
KOEI

Let's Make A Pro J-League Soccer Club! (PS2): Yes, let's!



HEIDI KLUM

Do this supermodel a favor

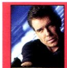
Heidi plays the malevolent Katya Nadanova in *Everything or Nothing*. If it sells enough copies, maybe—*just maybe*—she can afford a bite to eat.

photo: Corbis/Outline

BABES & BADDIES

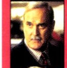
Everything or Nothing feels even more like a Bond film

Two years ago, EA released *Agent Under Fire* with the intention of it actually feeling like a Bond movie that wasn't actually based on a James Bond movie. With *Nightfire* last year, Pierce Brosnan's likeness was added, along with a generally improved cinematic style. As the next game to utilize the 007 license in such a way, *Everything or Nothing* evolves the series by casting Hollywood talent beyond the usual Bond crew we've come to expect (check out the cast to the right). As if it's not enough that all character models resemble their respective actors, we also hear their voices—a notable first for Pierce.



PIERCE BROSNAN

Now, instead of just seeing his likeness as in *NightFire*, you also hear his voice.



JOHN CLEESE

The ex–*Monty Python* comedian returns for his role as Q, the gadget guru.

JUDI DENCH

As M, Judi Dench plays one heck of a strong leader in the movies...in the game too.

SHANNON ELIZABETH

Will Serena St. Germaine be the videogame equivalent of Pussy Galore?

WILLEM DAFOE

With a name like Nikolai Diavolo, you have to be bad. Who better than Willem?

RICHARD KIEL

You may not know his name...but any Bond fan knows the face of Jaws.

OVERHEARD "I look forward to returning as James Bond in *Everything or Nothing*. Playing the role in the interactive realm lets me bring my interpretation of the character to a new generation of Bond fans." —Pierce Brosnan

Clish MacLaver's

GOSSIP GOSSIP

All the muck that's fit to rake

All kinds of good stuff this month, including some news that I genuinely hope actually happens. Like this first story about the future of Lara Croft. Wouldn't it be awesome if this happened?

LARA GOING TO CRYSTAL D?

By the time you're reading this (I'm writing it in early July) you may have read news of something happening with *Tomb Raider*, but as we go to press, I'm hearing all kinds of rumors about what's going to happen to the franchise. Since Core messed it up with such gay abandon and prompted every critic in the world to hammer the crap out of it, much has been said about Core's abilities. Perhaps it's just wishful thinking, but there are some strong indications that Eidos will set up a team for the second episode of the trilogy at Crystal D's offices. The new game will conseqently use a variation of the engine used in *Defiance* (which is gorgeous, and rocks), but with all of the art assets developed at Core for the whole series. Where would this leave Core, though? Right now...who cares? What was the last game they worked on that you actually liked? For me it was *Tomb Raider 2*, and that was a long, long time ago.

FANTASTIC

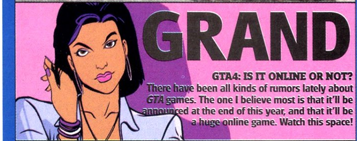
THE FOUR ARE COMING TO PS2

The latest superheroes to get their own game are the Fantastic Four, courtesy of Activision and 7 Studios. Look out for multiplayer co-op gameplay. Nice.

BURNOUT

A THIRD ONE ON THE WAY

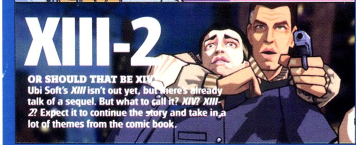
The popular *Burnout* franchise is set to spawn a third game next year. The development team is currently looking for more staff in the UK and we expect to see screens early next year.



GRAND

GTA4: IS IT ONLINE OR NOT?

There have been all kinds of rumors lately about *GTA* games. The one I believe most is that it'll be announced at the end of this year, and that it'll be a huge online game. Watch this space!



XIII-2

OR SHOULD THAT BE XIV?

Ubi Soft's *XIII* isn't out yet, but there's already talk of a sequel. But what to call it? *XIV? XIII-2?* Expect it to continue the story and take in a lot of themes from the comic book.

NEED FOR SPEED GOES TO THE ARCADE

Folks that got a kick out of last month's big cover game, *Need For Speed Underground*, will be thrilled to learn that it may be turned into an arcade machine. Expect a variation or hybrid of *Underground* and *Hot Pursuit*, with even wilder graphics! Sounds cool to me.

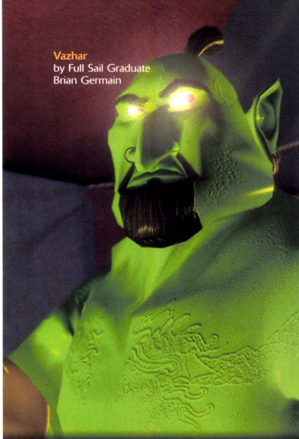
KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

With Xbox owners going absolutely ga-ga (and rightly so) over BioWare's *Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic*, a number of you have e-mailed to ask me if it will ever come to PS2. As far as I know, it's a true Xbox (and PC) exclusive. LucasArts has been quiet about plans to port the game to PS2, and it's safe to assume that with the good reception the game is getting, Microsoft is keen to keep it exclusive. If it does come...it won't be for at least a year. Yeah, I know. Sucks, huh?

E-MAIL ME!

Got some good gaming gossip? If you hear anything juicy or get your hands on some cool screens or pictures, send me an e-mail at the following address:

clish_maclaver@ziffdavis.com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GIMME A BEAT
The Roots' human beatbox, Rahzel (aka Rahzel the Godfather of Noyze), previously performed with Grandmaster Flash and L.L. Cool J.

SOUND STATION

By John Scalzi

Starring Madden NFL 2004

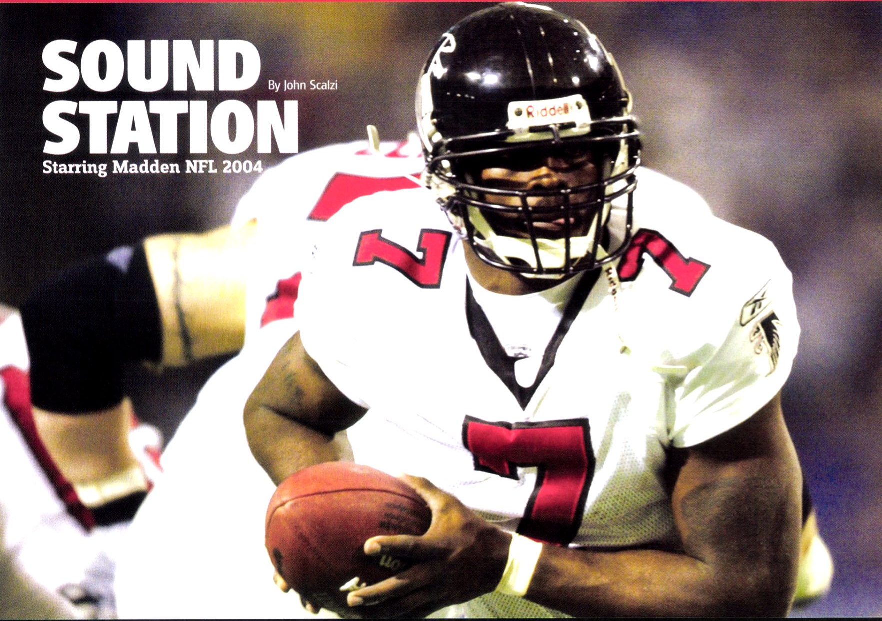


photo from Getty Images

AFI: *Sing the Sorrow*

afi
Sing the Sorrow

If I were 16 and clinically depressed and had somehow avoided raiding my cool uncle's CD collection for the Bauhaus albums, I would say *Sing the Sorrow* is, like, the coolest album ever. But I'm not, so *Sing* strikes me as distinctively goth lite—maybe a nice first dip into those shadowy places filled with pale people in high boots, but definitely in the shallow end of that murky pool. Part of this estimation is due to Davey Havok's light tenor, which is not really dusky enough for me; at certain points, he sounds like an '80s hair-metal shrieker.

Final Score ★★★

AM Radio: *Radioactive*

AM RADIO
radioactive

AM Radio plays slightly better than average power-pop punk and tellingly remembers that an excellent secret ingredient for any power-pop punk band is that slightly ragged edge of...well, most people would say "angst," but it's more accurate to call it "pathetic desperation." AM Radio is just a bunch of crunchy guitar-slingin' sad sacks, and it works on track after track, from the breakup deluxe of "If This is the End" to the sad, achy falsetto bravado of "Cold Blue." They come across as "pity date" material, which is not so good to *be*, but not bad at all to listen to.

Final Score ★★★½

Joe Budden: *Joe Budden*

Budden gets scarily autobiographical on the aptly named "Ten Mins." (it's 10 minutes long, you see), going on in detail about his life and times as a former drug user and son of a felon. This sort of track could have been like being trapped at a poetry slam gone rancidly wrong, but it's head-and-shoulders the best thing here, and some of the most affecting rap I've heard. The rest of the album is more playful, sometimes skating right up to the edge of obnoxiousness. It's all good, but it's "Ten Mins." that makes me want to keep an eye on where Joe goes next.

Final Score ★★★½

Gob: *Foot in Mouth Disease*

gOb
FOOT in MOUTH DISEASE

Three tracks into *Foot*, I was already thinking of mean ways to describe Gob's sound: "Bland 182," was one, "Sub 41" another. Maybe these guys live a hard-edged life at home, but they sure *sound* like posers; "Oh Ellin," is so puerile it sounds like what would happen if the members of low-rent boy band Dream Street decided to punk themselves up. This is a cheap swipe at Gob, but I guarantee you, fans of Dream Street have reason to be upset as well. Gob gets worked up once in a while ("This Evil World" clicks) but too few times, too far between.

Final Score ★★

The Roots: *Phrenology*

THE ROOTS
PHRENOLOGY

Smart, creative, funny, soulful and hard, *Phrenology* is more than a damn fine album, it's a veritable smorgasbord of the entire rap genre (and beyond—check out the slammin' 24 seconds of punk in "!!!!!!!"). For me, the Roots are at their best with a laid-back groove, like you get with the slithery "Sacrifice" or with the sexy funk of "The Seed." But there's something here for everyone and more than enough left to go back for seconds. The Roots overreach only once, with the turgid album closer "Something in the Way of Things (in Town)." Everything else is tasty.

Final Score ★★★★

advertisement

COMING SOON BANDAI

侵食汚染 .hack Part 3 OUTBREAK™

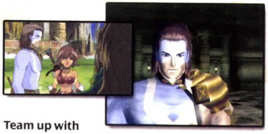
In the 3rd chapter of the .hack saga, "The World" continues to deteriorate as the virus spreads out of control, and crosses the increasingly transient line separating "The World" and reality. As Kite, you must battle your way through "The World" before it implodes upon itself. In part 3 of the .hack series, you are faced with the distinct possibility that this virus might be unstoppable, leaving .hack part 4 to be something developed by Mr. Nawton or Sam Antic. And still no internet fees involved!

publisher **Bandai**//developer **Cyber Connect 2**
genre **Simulated MMORPG**//release date **Fall 2003**

You'll fight your way through contaminated servers and eliminate enemies, all in an attempt to uncover the cause of this debilitating virus that is slowly taking over the network. And don't forget about your friend Orca who's still in the coma!

A great story and addictive gameplay.

I love part 3. I must admit I am addicted to the completely original gaming experience that .hack offers. I enjoyed part 1, and became addicted with part 2. The battles and story intensified, and the cast grew to include a motley crew of online/offline players. Moreover, the sensation of playing an online game intensified: emails and news items drew me further and further into "The World," and part 2 also has a cool mini-game — Grunty Racing.



Team up with characters from the animated TV series.

In part 3, every individual element of this story steps up another notch. This series keeps getting better and better. I'm completely hooked! .hack part 3 is a must buy. And I can only add that .hack 4 had better come soon.

-Orca, Web News, Altimit.

Abrasive False Tragedy

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www.dothack.com

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mature Sexual Themes
Mild Language
Violence

.hack//SIGN

As seen on CARTOON NETWORK

PlayStation®2

BANDAI®

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(s03)

RENAISSANCE MAN
Viggo Mortensen is a poet, artist, and musician. You can witness all his skills in a release called *Recent Forgeries*, available through Amazon.com.

DVD REVIEWS

By John Scalzi

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS

The middle child in a very gifted family

The middle films of trilogies are famously difficult things in that they're not beginnings or ends. It's the sort of thing that makes filmmakers twitchy, but apparently not Peter Jackson, who solves the problem in *The Two Towers* by ignoring it completely and just roaring through his story. It's a smart move: *TT* is definitely part of a greater whole (a film cycle that critics are already acknowledging as arguably the greatest fantasy put to film), but it's also its own thing, an unapologetic meditation on good and evil and what's required by the former to stand up against the latter.

This theme is most obvious in the brain-boggling Battle of Helm's Deep, in which Aragorn (Viggo Mortensen), Gimli (John Rhys-Davies), and Legolas (Orlando Bloom) stand with a paltry few humans against a manifestly evil army of darkness. But it's also in how Merry and Pippin rouse the tree-herding Ents from their apathy and into battle against Saruman, and most especially in the travels of Frodo (Elijah Wood) and Sam (Sean Astin), who have to deal not only with the evil of the Ring pressing on Frodo, but also with Gollum (voiced and performed by Andy Serkis but imaged in convincing CG), who is a walking dichotomy of these two moral states.

You don't have to spend a lot of time thinking about all this (you can just watch the great action and spectacular effects), but if you want it, it's there, provided in a subtle, intelligent fashion that (here comes the slam) makes *Star Wars*, the other leading good-versus-evil series out there, look like it's written by monkeys.

Like the release of *Fellowship* last year, this DVD comes with some decent making-of extras and a preview of the next film (and a short film by Sean Astin), but most of the real DVD goodies are being saved for the extended version, which comes out in November. But really. Like you're going to be able to wait that long.

Movie Score: ★★★★½
DVD Extras Score: ★★★

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

The Lord of the Rings
The Two Towers
(Elijah Wood, Viggo Mortensen)

UPCOMING DVD RELEASES

August 5, 2003
Agent Cody Banks
Bringing Down the House
Casablanca: SE
Futurama: Season 2
The Haunting
Soylent Green
Star Trek DS9: Season 4

August 12, 2003
Babylon 5: Season 3
Cradle 2 the Grave
Head of State
The Hunted
SNL: 25 Years of Music

August 19, 2003
Bowling for Columbine
Chicago
The Commitments
Roger & Me

August 26, 2003
Amazon Women on the Moon
ER: Season 1
The Howling
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers
Mr. Show: Season 3
Animal House: DSPE
Once Bitten
The Simpsons: Season 3

ANIMAL HOUSE: DOUBLE SECRET PROBATION EDITION

(John Belushi, Tim Matheson)

Animal House is the godfather of frat-party movies, and it's still the best one by such a wide margin that it's sort of sad—considering this movie is old enough that people born the same year it came out have graduated from college by now (or should have. That's a hint, guys). This film is the repository of the collective memory of John Belushi as the unstoppably manic Bluto. Honestly, I can't imagine why you wouldn't want this flick; it's so funny that it's tough not to pee yourself. For all that, the extras aren't *Double Secret Probation*–worthy: No commentary, for one thing, just some animated anecdotes and a "where are they now" bit.

Movie Score: ★★★★½
DVD Extras Score: ★★½

BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE

(Michael Moore, Charlton Heston)

Conservatives absolutely, positively hate documentary filmmaker

POP QUIZ

Q. What do *Chicago* and *Bringing Down the House* have in common?
A. Queen Latifah. She starred in *House* and played Mama Morton in *Chicago*.

TALK TO ME, GOOSE

Anthony Edwards, *ER*'s Dr. Greene, starred in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Revenge of the Nerds*, and *Top Gun*.

Michael Moore, primarily because he's like them: He's not really interested in being fair on the way to making his point. In *Bowling for Columbine*, his point is not so much that there are too many guns as it is that Americans are awfully eager to point them at each other and pull the trigger. The film tries to get at this through ways that are both slashingly funny and rhetorically over the top (for example, taking victims of the Columbine shooting to Kmart's corporate headquarters to get refunds on the bullets shot into them). The film may inspire or enrage you, but it's a guarantee you won't be bored. The DVD commentary is done by interns (really), and the extras include interviews with Moore, a teacher's guide, and a return to Columbine six months after the film's release.

Movie Score: ★★★★
DVD Extras Score: ★★★½

BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

(Steve Martin, Queen Latifah)

This was a surprise hit earlier this year, but it's difficult to see why people were surprised: It's Steve Martin and Queen Latifah! You'd really have to work at it to go wrong with these two. And don't think the movie doesn't *try*: The plot is as unoriginal as they come, and the central message (that all a repressed white guy needs for happiness is quality time with a street-smart black woman) is fairly patronizing to everyone involved. But when Martin and Latifah get going, you forget to be annoyed. They're fun, and that's all you need from this flick. Latifah and director Adam Shankman show up for the commentary reel, and the DVD comes with deleted scenes, a gag reel, and a music video.

Movie Score: ★★★
DVD Extras Score: ★★★

CASABLANCA: SE

(Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman)

Like you need to be told what this film's about. What? You do? I may weep. Bogart: crusty expatriate bar owner determined not to stick out his neck. Bergman: old flame trying to help her stuffy husband save the world from Nazis. Add fabulous supporting cast. Shake well. Pretty much the perfect "Hollywood" movie. *Casablanca*'s already out on DVD, but this special edition has much to love, including 10 minutes of newly uncovered extra scenes and outtakes, the pilot episode of a long-forgotten *Casablanca* TV series, two documentaries hosted by Bogart flame Lauren Bacall, commentary by Roger Ebert, and even a Looney Tunes cartoon ("Carrotblanca"). See it, because you're not a real moviegoer until you do.

Movie Score: ★★★★★
DVD Extras Score: ★★★★

CHICAGO

(Renee Zellweger, Richard Gere)

It's the first musical in 34 years to win an Oscar for best picture, but is it actually good? Sure, if you like musicals. And maybe even if you don't, because unlike the stereotypical musical, *Chicago* has real satirical bite, and its story about a gangster's gal who tries to become a star through her sensational trial is one that's scarily in line with today's reality-TV point of view. Plus, it's always amusing to see movie stars try to sing and dance, although at least two (Gere and Oscar-winner Catherine Zeta-Jones) do better than you would have suspected. DVD extras are skimpy (deleted scenes and a behind-the-scenes feature), so they're probably holding out for a special edition down the line.

Movie Score: ★★★★
DVD Extras Score: ★★

CRADLE 2 THE GRAVE

(Jet Li, DMX)

DMX is a thug, Jet Li is a cop, they're enemies but they join forces when...Hey! Wake up! Sorry, I'm obligated to tell you about the plot even when you can figure it out from the movie's poster. This film is primarily an excuse to give Jet Li a reason to beat the hell out of people for 90 minutes, and DMX is around because, well, why not DMX? The action here is competent but soulless, and it's pretty much a fact that the only difference between this flick and the 3,000 just like it is that it's the most recent. It's not bad, it's just not memorable in the least. Extras include a DMX video (of course) and a couple of documentaries.

Movie Score: ★★½
DVD Extras Score: ★★

ER: COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

(Anthony Edwards, George Clooney)

Arguably one of the best first seasons of any TV series, this powerhouse set of shows also features one of the best hours of episodic television ever: "Love's Labor Lost," in which the routine delivery of a baby goes horribly wrong. It's the sort of episode that can shut down a party while everyone crowds around the television, waiting to see what happens next (although if you're partying with the television on, you have other issues). The DVD offers commentary on that episode as well as the 90-minute pilot, "patient histories" of memorable guest stars, making-of features, and notes from series producer Michael Crichton.

Movie Score: ★★★★
DVD Extras Score: ★★★

HEAD OF STATE

(Chris Rock, Bernie Mac)

A funny black man runs for president! What a concept! Chris Rock does it all in this flick as star, director, and co-writer, and I like it because a) it's always fun when presidential candidates get to say what they think, not just what they think they should say, and b) Chris Rock probably should run for president in the real world. Why not? Can you think of anyone better off the top of your head? It's not a great movie, because away from the politics, it gets a little shaky. Bernie Mac is funny, but his character's trying too hard, and the film's just plain mean to Robin Givens as Rock's ex. But for the first time in the driver's seat, Rock does better than most. Rock gives it up for a commentary track; the DVD also includes a making-of feature and photo galleries.

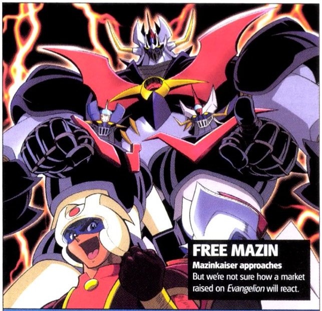
Movie Score: ★★★
DVD Extras Score: ★★

THE HUNTED

(Tommy Lee Jones, Benicio Del Toro)

A trained killer (Del Toro) has gone bonkers out in the woods, so it's up to the guy who trained him (Jones) to bring him in. The plot is weak, but this film has three things going for it: Del Toro and Jones, who are as real as possible in a film like this and make their battles appear to be as much about wits as physical strength, and director William Friedkin, who has forgotten more about dramatic pacing than, say, Michael Bay will ever know. The DVD comes with commentary by Friedkin, documentaries, and deleted scenes.

Movie Score: ★★★
DVD Extras Score: ★★★



FREE MAZIN

Mazinkaiser approaches

But we're not sure how a market raised on *Evangelion* will react.

ANIMANIA!

From Japan with love

Mazin-GO! Mazin-GO!

Lord knows why, but ADV Films is set to release a whole lot of classic robot action on DVD. *Mazinkaiser*, the 2001 revival of the seminal *Mazinger Z*, is coming out in August, while episodes of the quirky '80s survivor *Aura Battler Dunbine* (by *Gundam* veterans Tomino Yoshiyuki and Yutaka Izubuchi) will arrive this summer.

Bring Me Everything!

In more up-to-the-minute news, everything was licensed at Anime Expo. Almost every current anime of note has been bought by an American distributor and will be available in the United States on DVD sometime within the next 18 months. In the ongoing rush to keep up with digital piracy, American distributors are licensing titles that haven't even finished airing in Japan, as well as shows that are still in production.

Highlights: Bandai acquired the lycanthropian drama *Wolf's Rain* and the cutting-edge *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* TV series. • Pioneer will release the new *Read or Die* TV series, the *Gungrave* anime (based on the PS2 game), and the SF series *Texhnolyze*, by the creator of *Serial Experiments Lain*. • From Media Blasters, expect the legendary gay raunch epic *Boku no Sexual Harassment*, as well as the more conventional *Gunparade March*. • Finally, Central Park Media will release new-school parody in the form of *Animation Runner Kuromi*.

Galactic Heroes. A *Lot* of Galactic Heroes

The Japanese producers of the classic space opera *Legend of the Galactic Heroes* are offering a rare opportunity to American fans. If the company receives enough preorders from customers willing to commit to a purchase, it will produce a limited-edition English-subtitled version of the entire series, along with the already announced Japanese release: some 47 DVDs of television, movies, and other *Galactic Heroes* goodness. To sign on and help the U.S. release become reality, go to **www.gineigoods.com/form/** and check out the deal.

FLCL Goes Swimming

Between the announcement of a broadcast release at Fanime Con and a few hints dropped during *Adult Swim* recently, it looks like Gainax's *FLCL* is due to hit American airwaves by way of the Cartoon Network. It's not clear when it will air, but if you haven't picked up the DVD release yet (volume three is due out as you read this, by the way), catch it on the tube and be convinced.

–Dave Smith

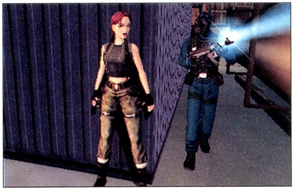
INITIAL WHAT?
This month's top Japanese game, *Initial D: Special Stage*, is based on an anime centered around cars.

BY THE NUMBERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EB GAMES electronics boutique

PS2 Top 20 Sales

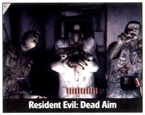
Vice City all the way down at No. 17?! There hasn't been a *Grand Theft Auto* ranked that low since before *GTA3* came out. Watch out, Tony Vercetti! *Chessmaster* is hot on your tail!



What pushes a megahyped, wholly mediocre game out of the top spot? A megahyped, wholly crappy game, of course! Success like this all but ensures another Lara adventure...good or not.

	Title/Publisher	Rating
1	**Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness** (Eidos)	★★
2	**Enter the Matrix** (Atari)	★★★
3	**Hulk** (Universal Interactive)	★★★★
4	**NBA Street Vol. 2** (EA Big)	★★★★★
5	**Midnight Club II** (Rockstar)	★★★★★
6	**Resident Evil: Dead Aim** (Capcom)	★★★½
7	**Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Operation Res.** (Activision)	★★★½
8	**Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits** (Sony CEA)	★★★★
9	**Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell** (Ubi Soft)	★★★★½
10	**Dynasty Warriors 4** (Koei)	★★★★½
11	**Finding Nemo** (THQ)	★★★½
12	**.hack//MUTATION** (Bandai)	★★★★
13	**MVP Baseball 2003** (EA Sports)	★★★½
14	**.hack//INFECTION** (Bandai)	★★★½
15	**Unlimited Saga** (Square Enix)	★★
16	**Tiger Wood PGA Tour 2003** (EA Sports)	★★★★½
17	**Grand Theft Auto: Vice City** (Rockstar)	★★★★★
18	**Chessmaster** (Ubi Soft)	★★★½
19	**DDRMAX: Dance Dance Revolution** (Konami)	★★★★
20	**FIFA 2003** (EA Sports)	★★★★★

Hulk


Resident Evil: Dead Aim

Dynasty Warriors 4

Unlimited Saga

Source: EB Games, June 2003. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets, and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff.

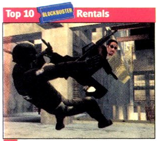
PS1 Top 10 Sales

1	**Final Fantasy Origins**	Square
2	**DBZ: Ult. Battle 22**	Infogrames
3	**InuYasha**	Bandai
4	**Final Fantasy VII**	Sony
5	**Namco Museum Vol. 3**	Namco
6	**Final Fantasy Tactics**	Square
7	**DDR Konamix**	Konami
8	**Beyblade**	Crave
9	**Bratz**	Ubi Soft
10	**Mega Man X4**	Capcom

Japan's Top 10 PS2 Games

1	**Initial D: Special Stage**	Sega
2	**Hanjuku Heroes**	Square Enix
3	**J. League Pro Soccer 3**	Sega
4	**Virtual-On Marz**	Sega
5	**Enter the Matrix**	Bandai
6	**Dynasty Tactics 2**	Koei
7	**Atelier Viorate**	Gust
8	**Metal Slug 3**	Playmore
9	**Fire Pro Wrestling**	Spike
10	**Nobunga's Ambition Online**	Koei

Top 10 BLOCKBUSTER Rentals



1	**Enter the Matrix (PS2)**	Atari
2	**Hulk (PS2)**	Universal Int.
3	**Midnight Club II (PS2)**	Rockstar
4	**NBA Street Vol. 2 (PS2)**	EA Big
5	**Enter the Matrix (Xbox)**	Atari
6	**Splinter Cell (PS2)**	Ubi Soft
7	**Midnight Club II (Xbox)**	Rockstar
8	**Brute Force (Xbox)**	Microsoft
9	**Def Jam: Vendetta (PS2)**	EA Big
10	**Return/Cas. Wolf. (PS2)**	Activision

SOURCE: BLOCKBUSTER, WEEK ENDING JUNE 22, 2003

Top 10 Sales, All Systems

1	**Tomb Raider: Angel... (PS2)**	Eidos
2	**Star Wars Galaxies (PC)**	LucasArts
3	**WarCraft III: FT (PC)**	Blizzard
4	**Enter the Matrix (PS2)**	Atari
5	**Hulk (PS2)**	Universal Int.
6	**Neverwinter: Shadows (PC)**	Atari
7	**Brute Force (Xbox)**	Microsoft
8	**Midnight Club II (Xbox)**	Rockstar
9	**NBA Street Vol. 2 (PS2)**	EA Big
10	**D. Kong Country (GBA)**	Nintendo

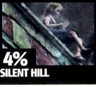
Labor Day Trippin'

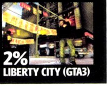
In our playstationmagazine.com poll, we asked: Which of the following videogame destinations would you go to for your Labor Day weekend? Looks like most of you wanna get capped in the '80s.

54%
VICE CITY (GTA: VICE CITY)

23%
VANA'DIEL (FINAL FANTASY X)

14%
RACCOON CITY (RE)

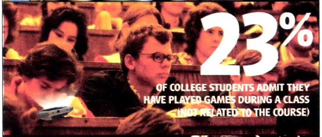

4%
SILENT HILL

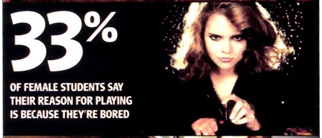

2%
LIBERTY CITY (GTA3)

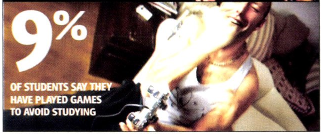
School Daze

Class starts back up soon. Doesn't mean you can't keep gaming!

65% **OF COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE REGULAR OR OCCASIONAL VIDEOGAME PLAYERS**


23% **OF COLLEGE STUDENTS ADMIT THEY HAVE PLAYED GAMES DURING A CLASS (NOT RELATED TO THE COURSE)**


33% **OF FEMALE STUDENTS SAY THEIR REASON FOR PLAYING IS BECAUSE THEY'RE BORED**


9% **OF STUDENTS SAY THEY HAVE PLAYED GAMES TO AVOID STUDYING**

SOURCE: PEW INTERNET & LIFE PROJECT

photos from Corbis/Outline

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NORTH
UNC
CAROLINA
72

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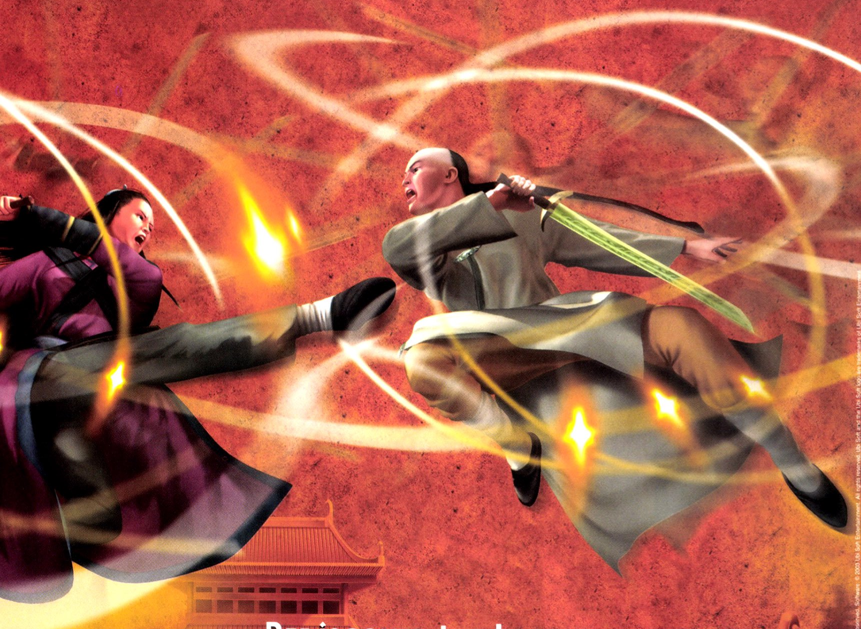
HIDDEN DRAGON™
Enter the Green Destiny Sweepstakes at http://crouchingtiger.ubi.com
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Violence

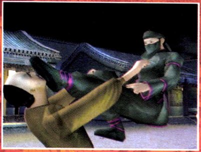
DESTINY. CRUSADE OF A LIFETIME.



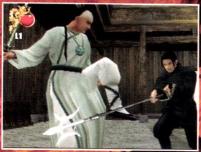
REDISCOVER THE LEGEND.

Three years ago, **Ang Lee's** *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* became an instant martial-arts classic, earning an Academy Award® for Best Foreign Film. Now, experience all the kung-fu fury from this martial-arts masterpiece as you execute over 90 wu-xia moves inspired by renowned choreographer Yuen Wo-Ping. Green Destiny beckons you. Rediscover the legend.

4 Playable Characters: Li Mu Bai, Yu Shu Lien, Jen, and "Dark Cloud" Lo.



Superhuman Martial Arts: Master the dizzying combos from the film.



Expanded Storyline: Unlock bonuses and experience multiple endings.

Ubi Soft
www.ubi.com
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75 World Championship Pool

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

REALMS OF EVERQUEST

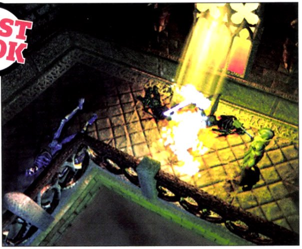
FIRST LOOK

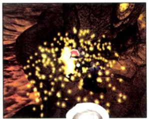
EverQuest just got cool

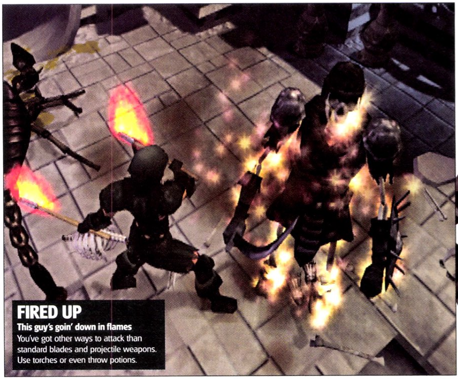
Don't let the disappointment that was *EverQuest Online Adventures* leave a bad taste in your mouth. Not only is a newer, better *EQOA* you might actually want to play is coming soon (see page 66), but the universe created by the franchise also provides the basis for what could very well be one of the best games of the year.

Champions of Norrath takes place several hundred years before Sony Online's massively multiplayer online RPG and adapts a gameplay feel more akin to Interplay's excellent action-RPG *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*. There's good reason for that: Snowblind Studios, the developer of *Alliance*, is creating *Norrath* with an evolved version of its already great gameplay engine. In addition to having the ability to zoom in and out on your character, you can now expect to see as many as 30 to 40 orcs, goblins, and other malevolent menaces onscreen at once. No two adventures will ever be the same, either, as each of the 50 (yes, 50!) dungeons randomly generates its form. Choose highly customizable male or female versions of a barbarian warrior, dark elf shadow knight, high elf cleric, erudite wizard, or wood elf ranger, and join up to three comrades via Multitap. Even hop online for a totally unique multiplayer experience!

Publisher: Sony Online Ent. **Developer:** Snowblind **Release Date:** November



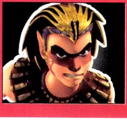




FIRED UP

This guy's goin' down in flames

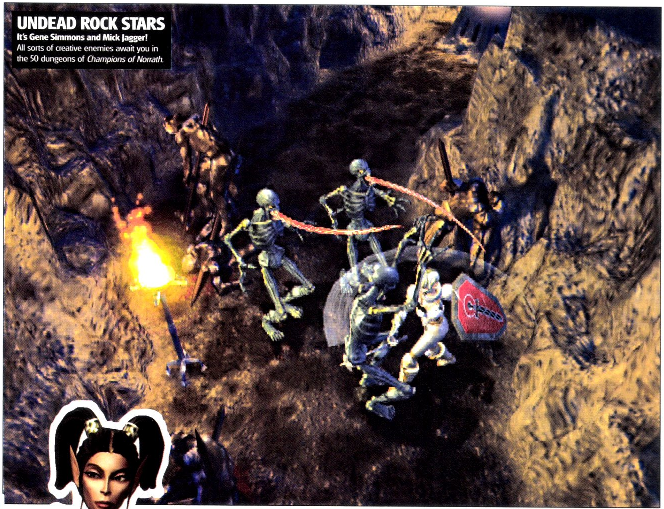
You've got other ways to attack than standard blades and projectile weapons. Use torches or even throw potions.



65
JUMP
A blast to the past
Sphinx does platforming right

67
SNEAK
***Rogue Ops* surprises us**
Is Nikki the next Sam Fisher?

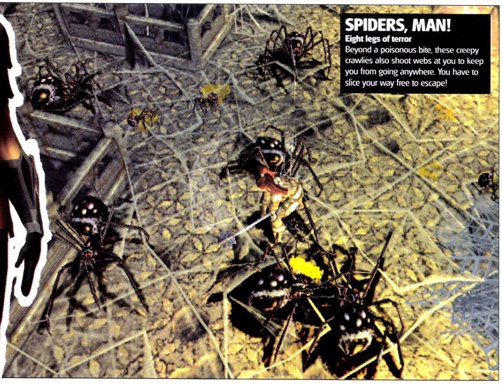
69
SAVE
Maximo is baximo
And now he's a true hero



UNDEAD ROCK STARS

It's Gene Simmons and Mick Jagger!

All sorts of creative enemies await you in the 50 dungeons of *Champions of Norrath.*



SPIDERS, MAN!

Eight legs of terror

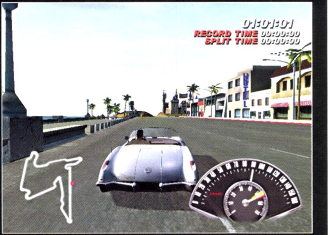
Beyond a poisonous bite, these creepy crawlies also shoot webs at you to keep you from going anywhere. You have to slice your way free to escape!

BOOB TECHNOLOGY

You remember the bar wench....

If there's one thing Snowblind has mastered, it's the physics involved in massive cleavage, as exhibited by each of these lovely ladies. Just visit *Dark Alliance*'s tavern for a preview.

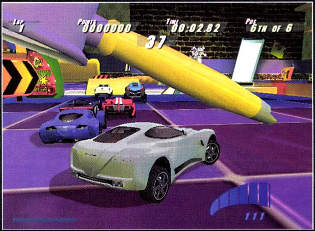
70% *Driver 3* is mostly car chases, but 30 percent is also running around and shooting at stuff.

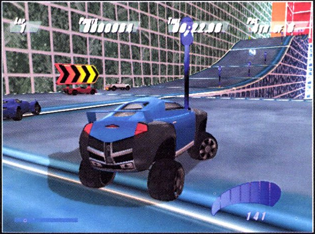


CORVETTE

Possibly the most imaginative name for a licensed racing game ever, TDK's *Corvette* features every model of Chevy's classic brute in a giant interactive celebration of the car's 50th anniversary. A cynical gamer would be excused for thinking this might be a soulless marketing ploy by GM to get the kids into its plastic supercar. We would never suggest such a thing, though. Never.

Publisher: TDK Mediactive **Developer:** Steel Monkeys **Release Date:** November





MICRO MAYHEM

Frankly, we're skeptical that any miniaturized racing game will be able to top the frenzied action of *Micro Machines*, but we're willing to keep an open mind—especially since *Micro Mayhem* is reported to be going for a *"Burnout* feel." The idea of that kind of racing insanity on a microcosmic scale is pretty intriguing. Handling will be key, though, so we'll curb our enthusiasm until we get hands-on time.

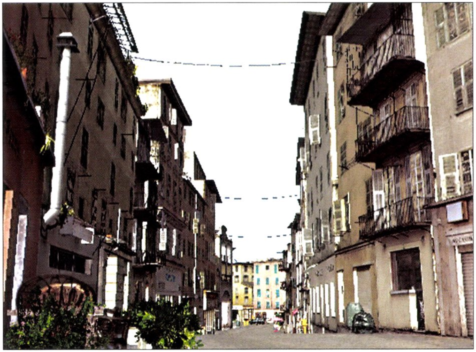
Publisher: Jaleco **Developer:** Blade **Release Date:** Fall

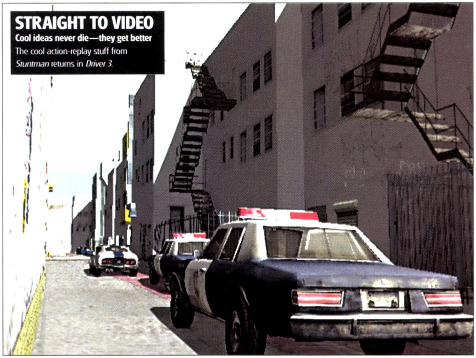
DRIVER 3

Look! Screens that look like Stuntman!

The prize for most elusive high-profile game of the year goes to Reflections' new *Driver* offering, which, apart from making a quick appearance on *Electronic Gaming Monthly*'s March cover earlier this year, has been notably absent. The game was oddly MIA at E3, and it's been hardly a blip on anyone's radar since then. What's going on? These new screens are the first we've seen in a while, and gameplay details are still a little sketchy, aside from protestations from Atari that it's "not like *Grand Theft Auto*!" We do know that the game takes place in Nice, Istanbul, and Miami (the setting of the first level of the original *Driver*) and that the team at Reflections is striving for a photorealistic look much as it did with the somewhat-flawed *Stuntman*. Let's hope that doesn't mean it suffers from *Stuntman*'s slowdown.

Publisher: Atari **Developer:** Reflections **Release Date:** 2004...if we're lucky





STRAIGHT TO VIDEO

Cool ideas never die—they get better

The cool action-replay stuff from *Stuntman* returns in *Driver 3*.

1.2 mil. Total number of vehicles that entered the Grand Canyon National Park through the south entrance in 2002.

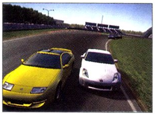
$5,800 Money earned by champion Red Byron in NASCAR's first year. (In 2001, Jeff Gordon pocketed $6.65 million.)

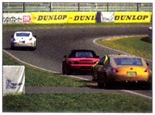
GRAN TURISMO 4

You've still got awhile to wait

The release date given for *Gran Turismo 4* is "winter," which to all of us probably means sometime around Christmas, right? Wrong! Winter apparently means any time between now and the end of March, which means we could still be six or seven months away from seeing *GT4* in stores. It's more than half a year before we race each other online; collect garages full of classic muscle cars, rice rockets, and exotics; and marvel at the stupendous visuals served up by gorgeous-looking tracks (the Grand Canyon and inner-city tracks excited everyone at E3). Although Polyphony has completed most of the design work for *GT4*, all kinds of goodies may still make it into the final game. We may even get aftermarket mods like cool rims and body kits, and engine modifications like turbos, which will make the game even *more* popular. If that's even possible!

Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** Polyphony **Release Date:** Winter





STI Performance
STi
STi
SUBARU

Rep 00006
Time 04:55 pm
BODY
TIRE
NX1
NX2
AT 1

Rep 00001
Time 04:28 pm
BODY
TIRE
NX1
NX2
AT 3

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS

Lots of licensed cars and aftermarket parts are the draw in Universal's inevitable *Fast and the Furious* game. We're actually quite surprised it took this long for a game based on the franchise to emerge. Set in L.A. (not Miami, as in *2 Fast 2 Furious*), the game has you racing in 80 different events, including drag races and street races where your aim is to earn cred with the other racers.

Publisher: Universal Interactive **Developer:** Genki **Release Date:** Fall

NASCAR THUNDER 2004

Besides online gameplay, the big upgrade to this year's *Thunder* is the Rival system. Gone are the days when you could beat and bang with impunity. Now the 42 other drivers react to your every move. Knock a guy out of the way and you better hope he doesn't catch you, 'cause he'll pay you back. Friendships and rivalries build up over the course of a season or career, making each race a unique experience.

Publisher: EA Sports **Developer:** EA Tiburon **Release Date:** September

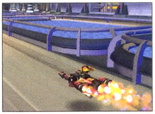
STILL TICKING
Best known as David Puddy on *Seinfeld*, Patrick Warburton provides a voice in *Tak*.

TAK AND THE POWER OF JUJU

Funny...but is it fun?

In a crowded field of platform adventures, *Tak* stands alone. But it's not because of the game's quality, innovation, or graphical splendor, mind you—other games do a much better job there. And it's certainly not due to the "Power of Juju." Instead, it's thanks to *Tak*'s terrific humor. Whether he's falling on his ass, sneaking around as a sheep, riding a rhinoceros, or wearing a chicken outfit, Tak is meant to be laughed at. The game is overstuffed with wacky antics and silly situations right out of, say, a Nickelodeon cartoon (which, by the way, happens to be in the works as well). If *Tak*'s gameplay somehow turns out to be as fun as it is funny, this one could be a winner.

Publisher: THQ **Developer:** Avalanche **Release Date:** Fall



RATCHET & CLANK GOING COMMANDO

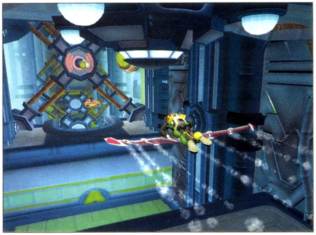
It'll knock your shorts off

It seems so simple, so straightforward—but properly toss in some RPG elements and you can radically change a platformer. "The difference between playing *Going Commando* and *Ratchet 1* is huge, because I'm not just picking up bolts anymore," says Insomniac's President Ted Price. "When I'm killing enemies, I'm getting better. I can see my character improving. It's the kind of thing I personally love about RPGs—and now that we've got it in here, I feel a lot more inclined to play all of this. It's much more fun for me, and I hope you guys find the same thing."

We've played a few levels, and while *Commando* quite resembles its predecessor, the RPG additions really do make it that much better. Plus, a host of new weapons and gadgets helps keep things fresh and tasty.

Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** Insomniac **Release Date:** November

HANDS ON

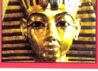


CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Ratchet isn't such a "jerk" anymore

Thought Ratchet was a tad annoying? Insomniac's Ted Price agrees. "Last year, we got lots of complaints about Ratchet's personality," he says. "Ratchet was kind of a jerk to Clank. He was impetuous; he didn't think before he spoke. That was our goal. We wanted to create tension between Ratchet and Clank to develop their characters. But now that people know who Ratchet is, we're creating a more heroic, more confident character. He should be a bit more likable this time around." And what about Clank? "Clank is still the same old Clank," Price says, adding, "Clank actually has a love interest."

17 or 18 The age at which King Tut died after taking the throne at 9. Cause of death remains unknown.



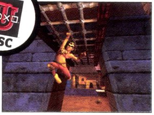
SPHINX AND THE SHADOW OF SET

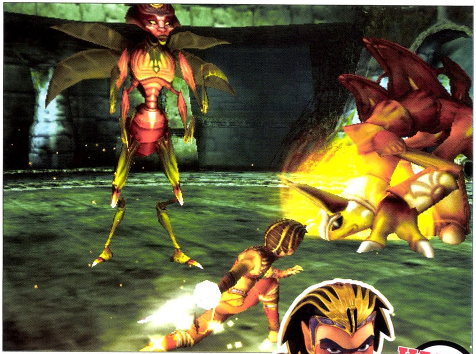
ON THE DISC

Funky Tut

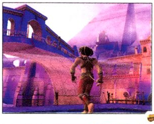
Peek at the following screenshots and you're likely to dismiss *Sphinx* as this year's *Haven*—a solid but uninspired platformer with a lame lead character. But play it (yes, play it...now! It's on this month's disc) and you might come away with a much different impression. Not only is *Sphinx* absolutely gorgeous, with Disney-caliber animation, but it also has some inspired puzzles and a goofy sense of humor. We especially like the level featuring the mummy Tutankhamen, who has to do everything from electrocuting himself to setting himself ablaze in order to solve a series of stumpers. So far, the only complaint we have is with the stubborn camera, which we're hoping gets a quick overhaul in time for the release.

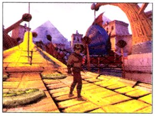
Publisher: THQ **Developer:** Eurocom **Release Date:** Fall

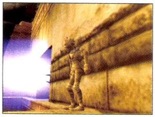


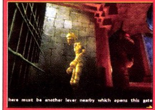


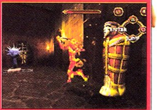
HANDS ON





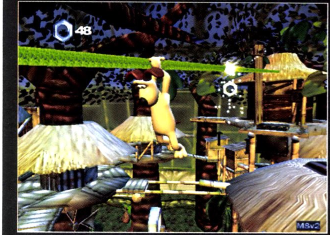


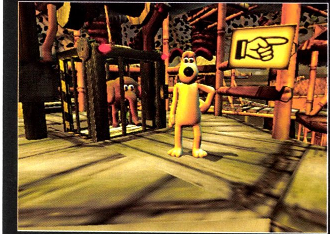




BURN, BABY, BURN

Stumped? Here's how to unlock the gate to the Earth level in our playable demo. After you insert the Earth key and launch yourself to that level, you'll find yourself in front of a locked gate. What to do? You have to backtrack a bit. First, return to the ground area and reinsert the Lunar key. Then head back into the Lunar level just far enough to set yourself aflame. Turn around (remember to crawl beneath the water jet) and return to the room where you received your very first electroshock (avoid the water, though). Hide in the sarcophagus until the grate is lifted, then run toward the wooden barrier to set it on fire. Behind it lies a switch that unlocks the Earth gate.

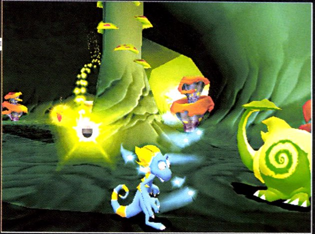




WALLACE & GROMIT IN PROJECT ZERO

There are two kinds of people in the world: *Wallace & Gromit* fans and everyone else (read: people who don't hail from England). The U.K.'s charming claymation duo is perfectly captured in this platformer, which will please fans of the doddering inventor and his adventurous pup. And with its layered levels, wacky foes, and goofy gadgets, *Project Zero* might also be a solid choice for younger gamers.

Publisher: Bam **Developer:** Frontier **Release Date:** October



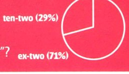
SCALER: THE SHAPESHIFTING CHAMELEON

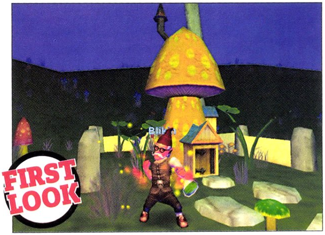
The title says it all. In this platformer, you assume the role of a lovable chameleon named Scaler. In addition to the creepy-crawly reptile's ability to blend in with his surroundings, he can even morph into look-alikes of his enemies and adapt their powers. There's a very Dr. Seuss feel to the game, which seems appropriate coming from the developer of *The Grinch*. Hopefully, though, this won't suck.

Publisher: TDK Mediactive **Developer:** Artificial Mind & Movement **Release Date:** 2004

Girls! Girls! Girls!
And Gnomes.

OPM POLL
How do you say "X-2"?





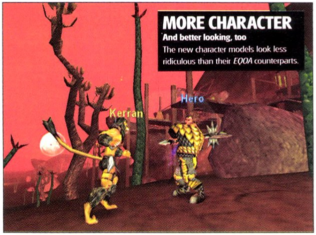
FIRST LOOK

EVERQUEST ONLINE ADV. FRONTIERS

Is it a sequel? Yes! Er, no. Yes! Um...

It's not often we deal with add-on packs on PS2, but in the PC gaming world, stuff like this happens all the time. So what exactly is *Frontiers*? Well, it's the entire original *EverQuest Online Adventures* with added sugary goodness, plus a whole extra bit of story and gaming you can experience only if you have this disc. It doesn't require the original to play, and it addresses many of the complaints people have with the previous massively multiplayer online RPG. As you wander the lands of Norrath, you can interact with folks playing the old game, then proceed into the new cities and hang out with all your cool new friends who are enjoying the enhanced graphics and music. You can even be an ogre now, or an alchemist...maybe even an ogre alchemist!

Publisher: Sony Online Entertainment **Developer:** SOE **Release Date:** November



MORE CHARACTER

And better looking, too

The new character models look less ridiculous than their *EQOA* counterparts.

WHAT'S NEW?

A lot more than you'd expect

If you're an *EverQuest* nerd, the following new additions will doubtless get you all in a quiver. *EQ* dissers, like our resident hatah Mr. Rybicki, might be sufficiently impressed by all this to give it another chance. So...here's the list.

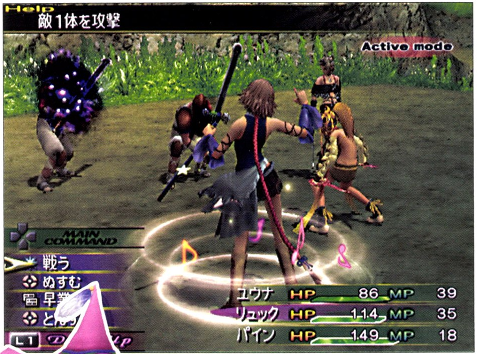
- A new character class, the alchemist
- Redesigned player models
- Playable ogre race
- Hundreds of new items to acquire
- A new class-mastery system
- You can level up to level 60
- Three new cities
- 24 gigantic new dungeons
- Environment clutter
- Cool weather effects

FINAL FANTASY X-2

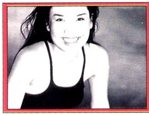
Hot girls with cool jobs

It all began with "Eternal Calm," a 12-minute video that appears on the Japan-only *Final Fantasy X International* (basically, an enhanced version of *FFX*'s U.S. release). Set two years after the game, it features Yuna peering into a sphere to see what seems to be her long-lost love, Tidus. A hint of a new game to come? Indeed! Enter *FFX-2*, the first-ever direct sequel to a *Final Fantasy* title. Since its announcement, fans have been excited but wary: "This is gonna focus on just the gals?" "It's got a 'dress-up' mode?" "No more Aeons?" As we get closer to release, fears of a girly-girl game have dissipated, replaced by eager anticipation. Why? The return of the Active Time Battle system, for starters. Then there's the whole job system: Each gal can take on a wide array of different jobs, changing her skills and abilities in the process. And it's all done on the fly during battles, with stunning animations and incredible effects.

Publisher: Square Enix USA **Developer:** Square Enix **Release Date:** December



Wait mode
ユウナ HP 108 MP 41
リュック HP 100 MP 52
パイン HP 116 MP 20



SEXY STARS

What a set of lungs!

By now, you might already have heard that Hedy Burress and Tara Strong are reprising their roles as Yuna and Rikku. We recently got word of the vocal talent behind the final *X-2* gal pal, Paine: Gwendoline Yeo, a model and actress, will lend her voice to the game.

TWO HEROES.
THEIR MISSION IS THE SAME.

MORE .HACKING
You play the games, you watch the TV show, yet you still can't get enough *.hack*? Stay tuned for the *.hack* manga from *Tokyopop*.

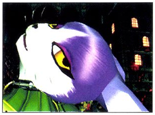
DID YOU KNOW?
In Japan, several people have used *RPG Maker 2* as a virtual résumé to land design jobs at various game developers.

.hack//OUTBREAK

The infection is spreading

So much depends on chapter three. It's the turning point, the moment of truth: Was all the time (and money) spent on the first two parts (*INFECTION*, *MUTATION*) of this serialized RPG worth it? From what we've played so far, most definitely. Picking up where *MUTATION*'s cliffhanger left off, *OUTBREAK* further opens up *.hack*'s world by giving you access to a new server, new Grunties, new allies, new foes, and an awesome new power for your bracelet, the 2128 Drain. The story continues apace, chronicling the exploits of Kite as he makes his way through The World, a massively multiplayer online RPG (which, if you didn't already know, is neither massively multiplayer nor online—it's just a simulated game within the game), trying to figure out what plummeted his online pal Orca into a coma. Meanwhile, The World continues to crumble and infect the "real world" beyond. Trippy, fantastic stuff. Just play the first two games first.

Publisher: Bandai **Developer:** CyberConnect2 **Release Date:** October

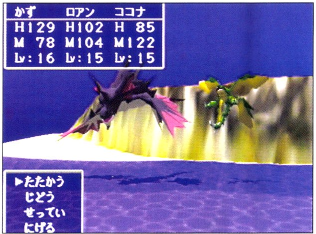


RPG MAKER 2

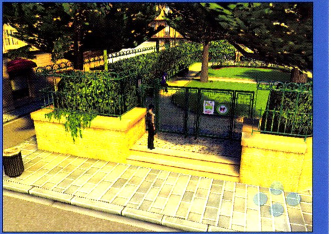
Why complain? Make your own game!

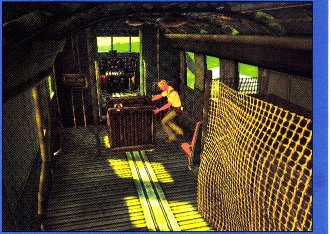
How many times have you cursed a game, mumbling, "I can do a better job than this hackneyed claptrap"? Well, it's time to put up or shut up. *RPG Maker 2* lets you try your hand at creating a full-featured 3D role-playing game by building the story, the battle system, and even the very earth your characters trod upon. Sounds a bit daunting, sure, but *Maker* comes with oodles of presets to fiddle with, so you can paste together bits and bobs in unique ways to cobble together your very own creation. Visually, the battle system mimics *Dragon Warrior*'s first-person view of enemies, but you can toss in *Final Fantasy*-style limit breaks, custom combos, and serious spells. The game also supports the use of a USB keyboard, so you won't have to hunt-and-peck your dialogue (we recommend Logitech's NetPlay). Need some inspiration? *Maker* comes with an RPG created by *Dragon Warrior*'s Kazunori Orio.

Publisher: Agetec **Developer:** Kuusou Kagaku **Release Date:** September



17, 18 The episodes of *Buffy*'s fifth season in between which *Chaos Bleeds* occurs.

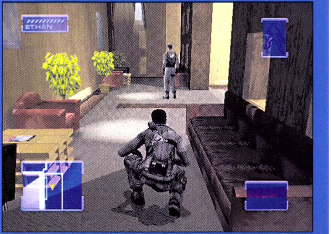




BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON

As one of the most smartly written and beautifully illustrated point-and-click adventure series of the last five years or so, *Broken Sword* shocked a lot of people by dropping the pointing and clicking in *Sleeping Dragon* in favor of a direct character-control system, similar to the one in *Escape from Monkey Island*. Luckily, the adjustment should make it easier for console owners to get into this great franchise.

Publisher: The Adventure Company **Developer:** Revolution **Release Date:** Fall



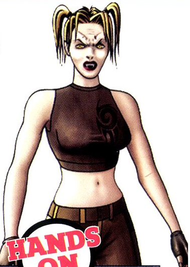
MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE–OPERATION SURMA

Imagine, if you will, *Splinter Cell* set in a slightly less-realistic world. What you're imagining is *Operation Surma*, a solid-looking stealth-espionage adventure with enough grappling-hook action and face-swapping antics to make any Bond, Fisher, or Snake fan's eyes light up. Plus, techno-thriller gadgets galore. What geek can resist?

Publisher: Atari **Developer:** Paradigm **Release Date:** Fall

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER CHAOS BLEEDS

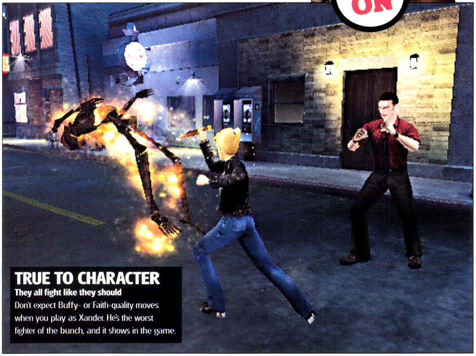
Serving up stakes in the Hellmouth



HANDS ON

The first *Buffy* game didn't appear on PS2, but the Xbox title earned some fine reviews—and *Chaos Bleeds* may be even better. Acclaimed studio Eurocom (*007: NightFire*) fills The Collective's capable development shoes and utilizes a solid fighting engine for each of the game's playable characters. As expected, Buffy gets the brunt of the action (50 percent or so), with fellow Scoobies holding their own: Willow stirs up magic spells, Faith sports some mad melee skills, Xander wields a crossbow, and friendly vamp Spike just generally beats the crap out of his bloodsucking brethren. Even better: All characters except Buffy and Willow are voiced by their respective actors!

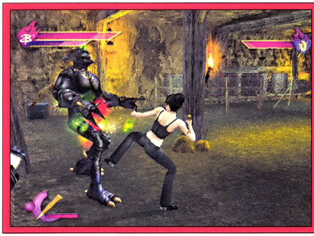
Publisher: Sierra/Fox Interactive **Developer:** Eurocom **Release Date:** Late August



TRUE TO CHARACTER

They all fight like they should

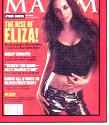
Don't expect Buffy- or Faith-quality moves when you play as Xander. He's the worst fighter of the bunch, and it shows in the game.



GOTTA HAVE FAITH

Eliza Dushku adds some heat

Eliza Dushku's appearance as Faith on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was enough to rope in a few new viewers. But she never wore her game outfit on the show—it's actually taken from her May 2001 *Maxim* cover. "You guys sure know your audience!" she told the developers.



SPHINX

AND THE MISFORTUNATE MUMMY™

THEIR METHODS

Play as Sphinx,
the cunning demigod.

Travel beyond Egypt,
to amazing new worlds.

Interact with hundreds of
enemies and allies.

Sorry sir, the jewel exhibit isn't open yet.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Fantasy Violence
EUROCOM™
ENTERTAINMENT
SOFTWARE

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PlayStation 2
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
THQ
www.thq.com

COULDN'T BE FARTHER APART.

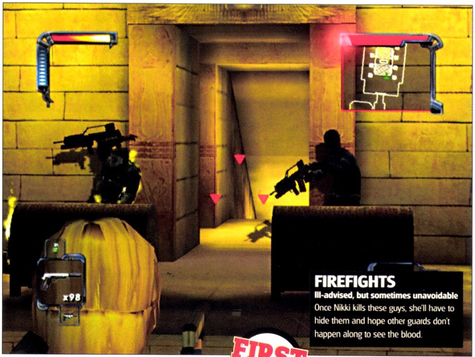
Play as the Mummy, he's a sucker for punishment.

Use the Mummy's immortality to solve puzzles.

Vanquish your enemies.

LARA LOOK-ALIKE
If you look at Nikki's original character design, it's easy to see why Bits recently changed the look of *Rogue Ops'* heroine.

THE MERRIEST PLACE ON EARTH
From October to January, it's become a Disneyland tradition to dress up the Haunted Mansion like Halloweentown.



FIREFIGHTS
Ill-advised, but sometimes unavoidable
Once Nikki kills these guys, she'll have to hide them and hope other guards don't happen along to see the blood.

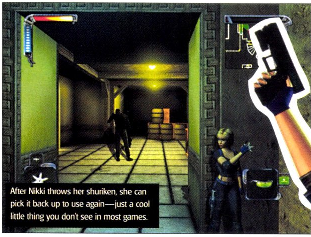
FIRST LOOK

ROGUE OPS

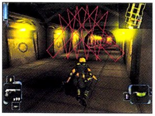
Splinter Cell with breasts

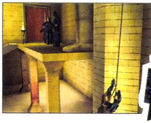
We'll be honest: At E3, we quickly dismissed *Rogue Ops* as a *Metal Gear Solid/Splinter Cell* wannabe starring a female as a gimmick to make us pay attention. After all, Kemco doesn't have the greatest recent track record, and it's easy to assume the company is simply trying to cash in on a popular genre. Surprisingly, however, it looks like *Rogue Ops* will actually be worth a look. Once you get past the generic story (ex-Green Beret Nikki Conners joins a covert government agency to avenge the death of her family), you'll find a solid stealth game with its fair share of clever puzzles—not to mention clever A.I. Enemies are very sensitive to sound, footprints, and even the blood left over from a gun kill (you should opt for bloodless neck breaks when possible). The game even includes some nifty gadgets we've never seen before. Our favorite: a mosquito-sized camera that scouts out the area ahead.

Publisher: Kemco **Developer:** Bits Studios **Release Date:** November



After Nikki throws her shuriken, she can pick it back up to use again—just a cool little thing you don't see in most games.





MUPPET PARTY CRUISE
Publisher: TDK Mediactive
Developer: Mass Media
Release Date: Fall
The idea of a Muppet party game certainly appeals to us...we just wish the developer of *Shrek Super Party* and *Pac-Man Fever* wasn't responsible for it.

ROADKILL
Publisher: Midway
Developer: Terminal Reality
Release Date: October
Think *Twisted Metal* meets *Grand Theft Auto* with a little bit of *The Road Warrior* thrown in for good measure and you'll paint a pretty accurate picture of *RoadKill*. Accomplish missions and generally just mess stuff up in a postapocalyptic world overrun by the scum of society. It definitely seems like a winning combo. Best of all—the intro is set to Blue Öyster Cult's classic "(Don't Fear) The Reaper." Rockin'.

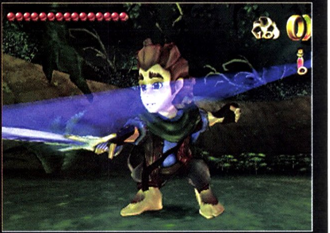
THE HAUNTED MANSION
Publisher: TDK Mediactive
Developer: High Voltage
Release Date: October
The *Haunted Mansion* movie due this fall shares its name (but little else) with the Disneyland ride. Same with this comedic game, based *loosely* on both.

Creature Card
Hornet
Creature
Item Limit
Bonus attack,put
effect of poison to
the opponent
1 card has been drawn

CULDCEPT
Publisher: NEC
Developer: Omiya Soft
Release Date: November
Based on the popular Japanese collectible card game, *Culdcept* combines elements of *Monopoly* and *Magic: The Gathering*. Nothing pretty, but quite fun.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Io Interactive
Release Date: September
First it was *Freedom: The Battle for Liberty Island*, then *Freedom: Soldiers of Liberty*. Now, it's *Freedom Fighters*. Unless EA's gone and changed it again.

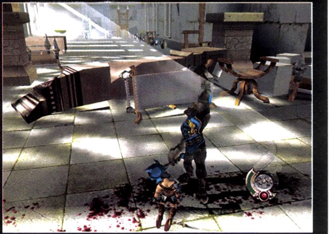
JUST AS TOLKIEN DREAMED...
To help promote *The Hobbit*, Sierra has inked a deal with McDonald's for *Hobbit* Happy Meals this fall.

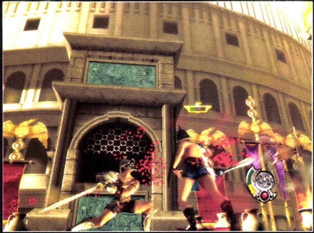


THE HOBBIT

Based on the prelude to *The Lord of the Rings*, this game doesn't adapt the style of the movie or Black Label's games based on Tolkien's novels, opting instead for a more kid-friendly look (appropriate given the source material's tone). During Bilbo's journey from Hobbiton to the Lonely Mountain, expect lots of hack-n-slash/platforming action along with some relatively simple puzzle solving.

Publisher: Sierra **Developer:** Inevitable **Release Date:** September 23





GLADIATOR: SWORD OF VENGEANCE

If you just can't get enough gratuitous blood and gore, you're in for a treat: *Gladiator* has got enough of both to choke a horse. There are more than *60* death animations reported to be "based on authentic historical data," with tasteful flourishes such as decapitation and dismemberment. But it's not all historical simulation; you also hang out with the gods themselves. What more could you ask for?

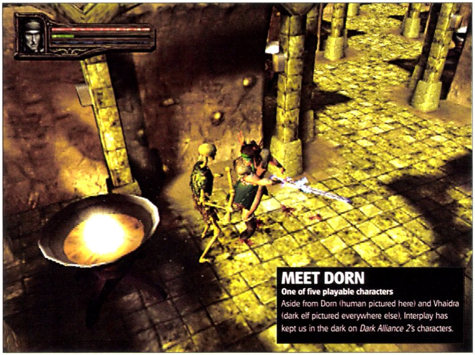
Publisher: Acclaim **Developer:** Acclaim Manchester **Release Date:** Fall

BALDUR'S GATE
DARK ALLIANCE II

Can it continue the original's greatness?

If you read our review of *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* 20 issues ago, you know how much we love it. If you read our preview of *Champions of Norrath* eight pages ago, you know how much we're anticipating it—in a way, it's even quelled our enthusiasm for *Dark Alliance II*. But even if Snowblind Studios has left the Forgotten Realms in favor of the *EverQuest* universe, it still appears there's quite a bit to look forward to in Interplay's hack-n-slash action-RPG sequel. For starters, it's bigger—more than 40 levels spread over four acts. The story continues from the original's cliffhanger ending and branches in different directions depending on your actions—each time through is unique. You can also now create your own weapons and armor from raw components.

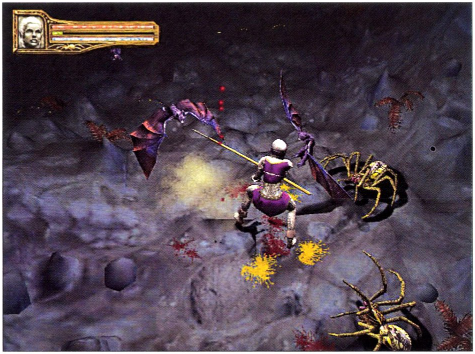
Publisher: Interplay **Developer:** Black Isle Studios **Release Date:** October



MEET DORN

One of five playable characters

Aside from Dorn (human pictured here) and Vhaidra (dark elf pictured everywhere else), Interplay has kept us in the dark on *Dark Alliance 2*'s characters.



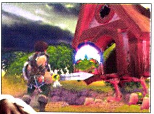
84% The average review score for *Maximo: Ghosts to Glory,* according to metacritic.com.

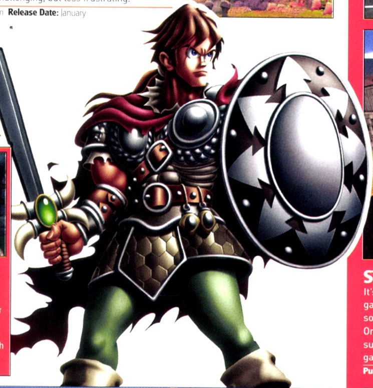
NO, IT'S NOT A GRAN TURISMO
The trademark vehicle used in *Starsky & Hutch* was a 1974 Ford Gran Torino. Can any car be more '70s?

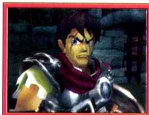
MAXIMO
VS. ARMY OF ZIN
More heroism, less frustration

In *Army of Zin,* the sequel to the solid yet flawed *Maximo: Ghosts to Glory,* Capcom wants to convey one central theme: heroism. "Not enough games show heroes being heroic," says Senior Producer Mark Rogers. "They're just out to save themselves." In order to illustrate selfless acts, *Zin* features distressed denizens in deathly peril throughout the game. Saving them rewards ol' Maxie with not only the feeling of having done right, but also valuable power-ups, tips, etc. To further the effect, Rogers' team has added a bevy of new hacks and slashes, which can now be linked to earn style points. New bosses are both interesting and creative—just look at the "birdhouse" to the right. And in response to complaints of *Glory* being too freakin' hard, *Zin* is "just as challenging, but less frustrating."

Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **Release Date:** January



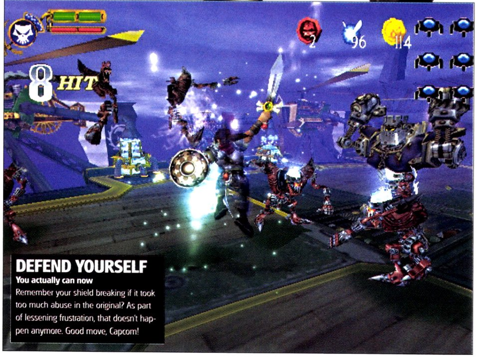




ANSWERS

Kinda like The Last Crusade

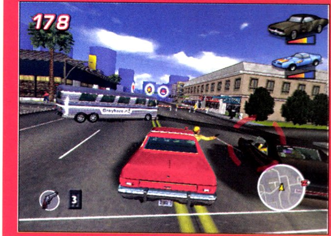
Ever wondered where Maximo's trademark scar came from? Oh. Well, neither have we. But in case you're curious now that we've brought it up, the answer lies in *Army of Zin* (even though the game's events actually occur eight months after those in *Ghosts to Glory*).

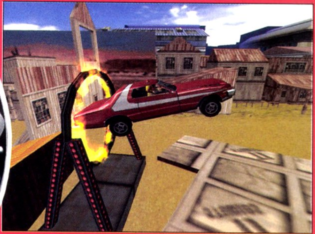


DEFEND YOURSELF

You actually can now

Remember your shield breaking if it took too much abuse in the original? As part of lessening frustration, that doesn't happen anymore. Good move, Capcom!

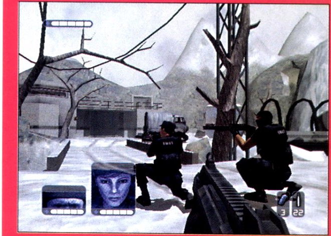




STARSKY & HUTCH

It's hard to beat *Starsky & Hutch* for pure '70s TV cheese, and this game embraces that cheese wholeheartedly. But it's also offering some interesting gameplay, including a unique two-player mode: One player drives, the other shoots—using full wheel and light-gun support, if you choose. Best of all is the narration throughout the game by Antonio Vargas, the original and eternal Huggy Bear.

Publisher: Empire **Developer:** Minds Eye **Release Date:** September

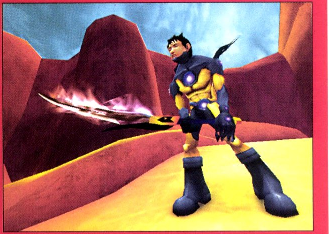


SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

Keeping the peace in the near future can be a pain in the ass. You yell and yell at those pesky terrorists (using a USB headset, like the one packed in with *SOCOM*), but they just won't *get down*! So then you end up having to shoot them in the face. OK, maybe you don't *have* to. Maybe some of them *do* listen. But isn't it more fun to pretend you don't hear them surrender? Sure, it costs you points, but who cares?

Publisher: Sierra **Developer:** Argonaut **Release Date:** October

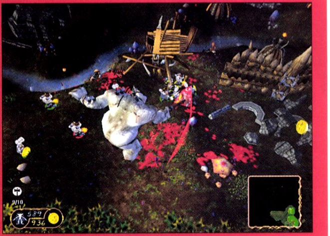
DID YOU KNOW?
TMNT co-creator Kevin Eastman is married to B-movie queen Julie Strain. Score one for the comic geeks!

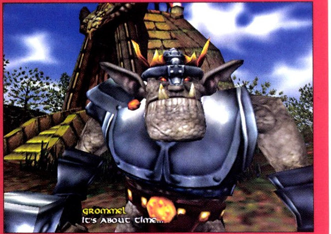


ALTER ECHO

Thanks to a suit made of MultiPlast (the most sought after element in the universe), your character, Nevin, changes into three different forms in his quest to halt the insanity of one of his Plast-abusing former friends. You'll hack and slash in Melee mode, target distant enemies in Gun mode, and sneak around like a bug in Stealth mode. This game won't change the world, but it should be fun.

Publisher: THQ **Developer:** Outrage **Release Date:** August

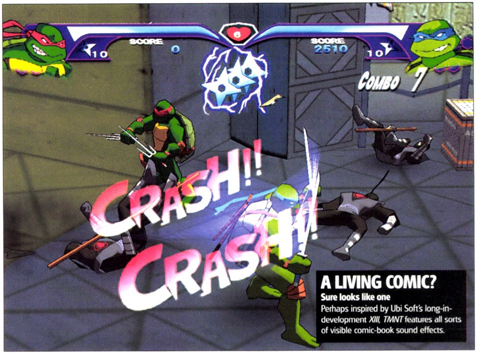




GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE

Yeah, it's got a funny name. Yeah, it's from a small publisher. But don't write off *Goblin Commander*. This real-time strategy comes to us from the Millar brothers, former Blizzard employees who worked on *Diablo* and *WarCraft*. Choose one of five uniquely gifted goblin forces to command in the war for the land of Ogriss.

Publisher: Jaleco **Developer:** Jaleco **Release Date:** Fall



A LIVING COMIC?
Sure looks like one
Perhaps inspired by Ubi Soft's long-in-development *XIII*, *TMNT* features all sorts of visible comic-book sound effects.

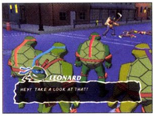
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

If all else fails, then it's time to kick butt!

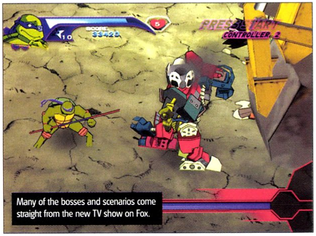
Have you seen the new *TMNT* cartoon? As hard as it is for us to admit, it really does surpass the one we grew up with. We also have some pretty fond memories of plunking quarters into Konami's *TMNT* arcade game—so, could a PS2 version based on the same beat-em-up gameplay fundamentals actually top the classic we remember so well? There's a very good chance. As much as we thought the arcade game resembled a cartoon back in the day, the cel-shaded graphics of the new title make the old one look, well, like it's 14 years old. We're a bit disappointed that only two can play at once, but an extra *Tournament Fighters*–like mode featuring everyone from Casey Jones to Splinter helps pick up the slack.

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Konami **Release Date:** October

PRESS START
CRASH!!

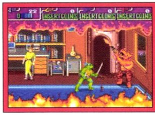


COMBO 3
PRESS START



Many of the bosses and scenarios come straight from the new TV show on Fox.

PRESS START
CONTROLLER 2



A COOL BONUS?
We're hoping this happens....
At E3, we talked Turtles with the *TMNT* team. When we asked if there was any chance of unlocking the old arcade game as a bonus, the answer wasn't yes...but it wasn't no, either: "We'll have to leave you in the dark on that one."

www.games-workshop.com
Official site of the Warhammer universe, as well as Games Workshop's other tabletop RPGs.

WARHAMMER 40,000 FIRE WARRIOR

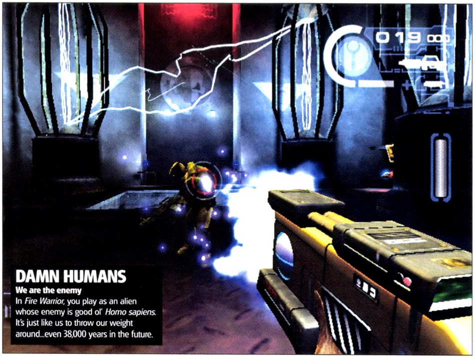
HANDS ON

Just don't expect any pewter figurines

The first time we saw this game, we were decidedly underwhelmed. It looked like any other futuristic FPS out there, with almost nothing of interest, no hook to draw in anyone other than die-hard *Warhammer*ers.

We're happy to report that the game has come a long way over the past few months. It's still not exactly earthshaking, but the gameplay we're seeing these days is fast and furious, the graphics are crisp and detailed, and the enemies appear smart and powerful. We're starting to see a bit more of the story, too, which involves a race of demonic aliens, complete with suitably death-metal weapons and settings (the sky turning to blood and all that) appropriate to the ridiculously futuristic timeline (40,000 is the *year*). It's definitely looking more promising.

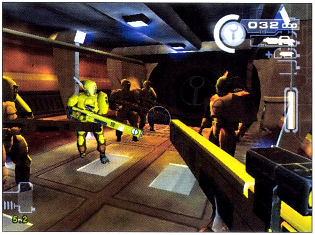
Publisher: THQ **Developer:** Kuju **Release Date:** Fall



DAMN HUMANS

We are the enemy

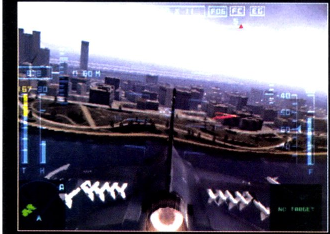
In *Fire Warrior*, you play as an alien whose enemy is good ol' *Homo sapiens*. It's just like us to throw our weight around...even 38,000 years in the future.

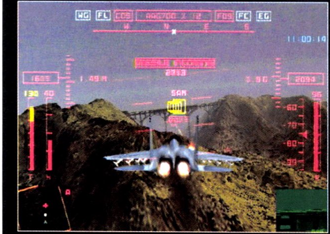


HEAD TO HEAD

Eight men enter, one man leaves

Thankfully, *Fire Warrior* offers what looks like a solid (if unexceptional) multiplayer experience. You can take on up to seven other players online (four players splitscreen) in games of Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, and Capture the Flag.

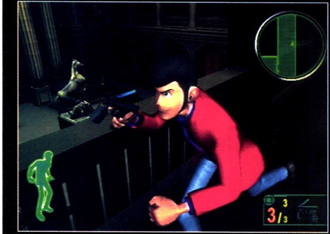




LETHAL SKIES II

While the original *Lethal Skies* wasn't exactly a barn burner, it had some interesting features. The sequel is capitalizing on those with more solid, realistic airplane controls; improved graphics; a deeper sci-fi story; and an even simpler, quicker interface. Add to that seven new planes, more than 20 new missions, and two-player splitscreen combat, and it's obvious the game's getting more than a face-lift.

Publisher: Sammy **Developer:** Asmik Ace **Release Date:** September



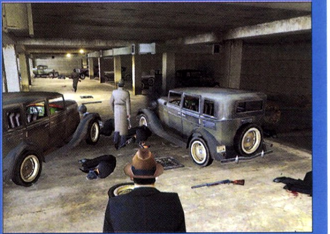
LUPIN THE THIRD

Take a dash of *Metal Gear*–esque stealth gameplay, a dose of humor, and a dollop of slick anime style and you've got *Lupin the Third*. Based on the hugely popular anime sensation, *Lupin* is a lighthearted romp starring the eponymous womanizing thief along with his cohorts Jigen and Goemon (both of whom are also playable). Don't miss the anime on Cartoon Network while you wait for *Lupin*'s fall release.

Publisher: Bandai **Developer:** Banpresto **Release Date:** Fall

I'm funny how?
Funny like a clown?
I amuse you?

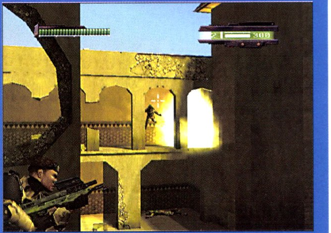
DRIVING, SHOOTING
Luxoflux, developer of *True Crime*, also designed *Vigilante 8* and *Star Wars Demolition*.

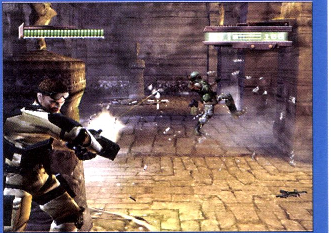


MAFIA

Has *GTA* not quenched your thirst for a life of crime? Then journey back to a time when Tommy Vercetti would have been seen as a second-rate pipsqueak. Set in the 1930s, *Mafia* follows the career of a mild-mannered cabbie who gets drawn into the underworld of organized crime. The shooting bits are fun enough, but it's the driving missions—complete with period vehicles—that have us excited.

Publisher: Gathering **Developer:** Illusion Softworks **Release Date:** Fall





KILL.SWITCH

Despite its bizarre title, Namco's upcoming third-person urban warfare shooter is worth checking out, thanks to some innovative new gameplay elements. Though it seems gimmicky at first, the ability to use surroundings for cover and aimlessly stick out your gun and spray bullets heightens the game's intensity. That said, you quickly begin to wonder why enemies always leave stacks of tires lying around.

Publisher: Namco **Developer:** Namco **Release Date:** October

TRUE CRIME
STREETS OF L.A.

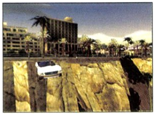
HANDS ON

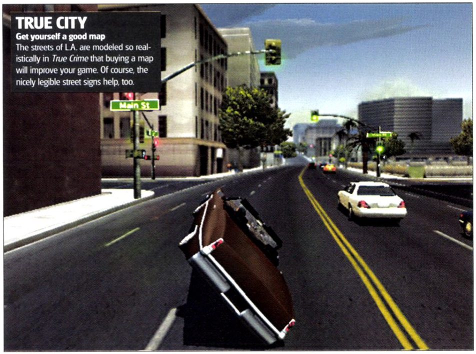
Note: NOT a GTA clone

There's been a lot of talk about all the new driving/killing/carjacking games coming up. Folks are saying these are all *Grand Theft Auto* knockoffs. Well, we're here to set the record straight about one of them, at least. *True Crime* is definitely *not* a *GTA* clone.

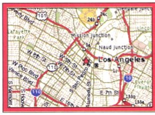
Sure, the game lets you steal any car in the city. Sure, your character deals deeply with organized crime. Sure, you have the choice of following story-based missions or performing freelance gigs. Sure, you can fight with a broad arsenal of weapons or go hand to hand. Er, where were we going with this? Oh yeah: *not* a *GTA* clone. Because it's set in Los Angeles. And you play as a cop. And you can shoot two guns at once. Um...did we mention it's set in L.A.?

Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Luxoflux **Release Date:** September

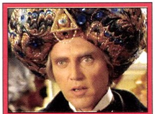




TRUE CITY
Get yourself a good map
The streets of L.A. are modeled so realistically in *True Crime* that buying a map will improve your game. Of course, the nicely legible street signs help, too.



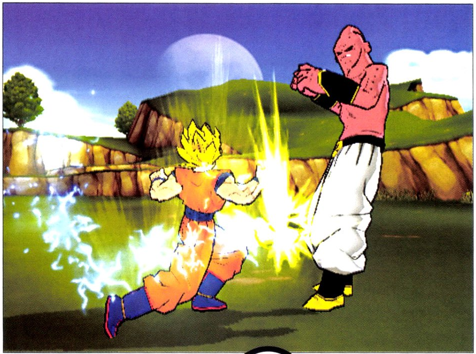
CITYSCAPE
Next up: Streets of Sheboygan?
All needling aside, the technology used by *True Crime* to re-create 250 square miles of L.A. streets is damn cool. The designers simply input satellite photos and GPS data, and the software generates an accurate city layout on the fly.



STAR STRUCK
True Hollywood talent
In a revolutionary move sure to set a new standard for game design, *True Crime: Streets of L.A.* features the voices of big-name film stars such as Christopher Walken (*Pulp Fiction*), Gary Oldman (*The Fifth Element*), and Michael Madsen (*Grand Theft Auto III*).

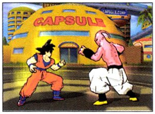
REMEMBER WHEN...? Though bastardized in translation for a pre–*Dragon Ball* American market, *Dragon Power* for NES (1986) is technically the first *DB*-related game released out here.

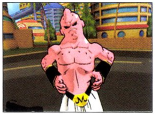
65% Percentage of *OPM* message board readers who say they'd play 3D Ages games.



DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI 2

FIRST LOOK



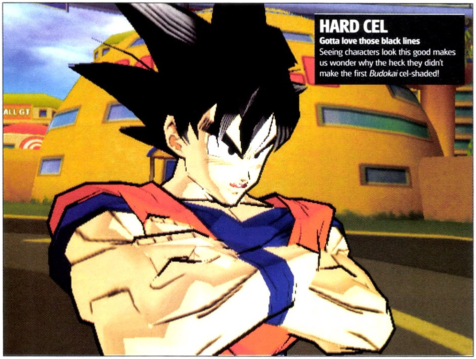


Buu-yah!

Wow, what a difference a year can make. Last year's solid-playing but wholly mediocre-looking *Budokai* is getting a sequel, and it looks like it'll kick the original's ass—visually, anyway.

With all-new cel-shaded character models for all 34 fighters and eight arenas, the game arguably looks better than the cartoon it's based on. But looks aren't the only area where *Budokai 2* promises to top its predecessor. The game also features a new Dragon mode, in which players battle alongside computer-controlled fighters as they work together to collect all seven Dragon Balls. Add to that the ability to perform Fusions (merging two characters for greater power), and it looks like *Budokai 2* will appeal to more than just fans of the show.

Publisher: Atari **Developer:** Dimps **Release Date:** December



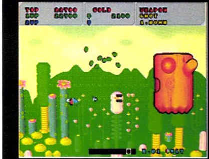
HARD CEL

Gotta love those black lines

Seeing characters look this good makes us wonder why the heck they didn't make the first *Budokai* cel-shaded!

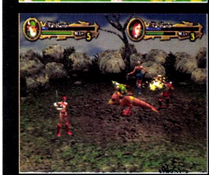
SEGA 3D AGES

As reported in *OPM* 65, a collaboration between Sega and D3 Publisher has resulted in a deal to release PS2 remakes of classic games in Japan all at the budget price of 2.500 yen (about $21). Let's hope Sega comes to its senses and releases these games here!



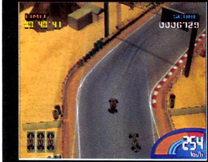
FANTASY ZONE
Publisher: Sega 3D Ages
Developer: Sega
Release Date: August 28

Fantasy Zone was always a little too cute for its own good. And it still is. But can you really deny saving the world with a flying egg thing called Opa-Opa?



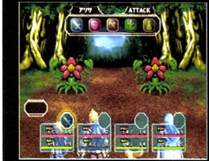
GOLDEN AXE
Publisher: Sega 3D Ages
Developer: Sega
Release Date: Fall

One of the most influential beat-em-ups ever released, *Golden Axe* moves the genre from the tough city streets of *Double Dragon* to a fantasy medieval setting.



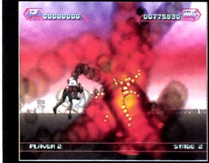
MONACO GP
Publisher: Sega 3D Ages
Developer: Sega
Release Date: August 28

Never thought you'd see this 1979 F1 classic using 3D models, did you? You probably never thought you'd see a top-down 3D racer, either. Well...here.



PHANTASY STAR: GENERATION ONE
Publisher: Sega 3D Ages
Developer: Sega
Release Date: August 28

This is the *Phantasy Star* that started it all! The Ages version of the Sega Master System game is perhaps the most updated remake of all.



SPACE HARRIER
Publisher: Sega 3D Ages
Developer: Sega
Release Date: Fall

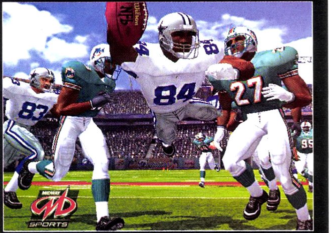
Even with 2D sprites, the original 1985 *Space Harrier* felt very 3D in its shooting perspective as you guided Harri through Dragonland. Now it actually *is* 3D!

DID YOU KNOW? The first five NHL teams (1917) were the the Montreal Canadiens, Montreal Wanderers, Ottawa Senators, Quebec Bulldogs, and Toronto Arenas.

NFL GAMEDAY 2004

Last year's *GameDay* was a big step up from the series' previous PS2 installments—that's not saying much, unfortunately. Of course, 989 tells us the 2004 edition is the greatest ever, due to its improved gameplay, player models, A.I., and online structure. The fact that we still don't have reviewable code for a game that's probably out as you read this, though, reinforces our "we'll believe it when we see it" state of mind.

Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** 989 Sports/RedZone **Release Date:** August 12


MIDWAY
SPORTS

NFL BLITZ PRO

Everyone has a great arcade-football time with *Blitz*, what with its over-the-top tackles, fast pace, and moments of being "on fire." But as the past few years have demonstrated, if you've played one version, you've played them all. Not anymore. With *NFL Blitz Pro*, Midway offers a closer-to-sim style of gameplay (11-on-11 instead of 7-on-7, for example) while maintaining the hard hits and core arcade elements.

Publisher: Midway **Developer:** Midway **Release Date:** September

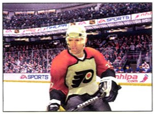
NHL 2004

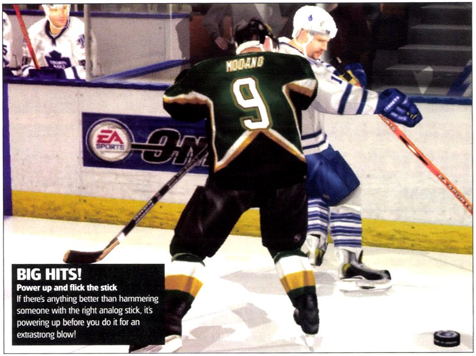
HANDS ON

The rebirth of a franchise

Forget everything you remember about EA hockey—aside from the basic look of it all, *NHL 2004* is a completely different gaming experience. A new control scheme moves the Hit button to the right analog stick, giving you more control over your punishing blows. EA Black Box has also ensured your ability to make long passes down the ice (as opposed to automatically shooting toward your closest teammate), and you'll hear all about it thanks to a more serious commentary than last year's, courtesy of play-by-play announcer Jim Hughson and color commentator Craig Simpson. According to the game's associate producer, Dean Richards, *NHL 2004* is also "probably going to set the benchmark for Dynasty modes" (check out the sidebar to see what he's talking about). As far as online play goes, don't expect anything superfancy, but definitely count on voice chat.

Publisher: EA Sports **Developer:** EA Black Box **Release Date:** September

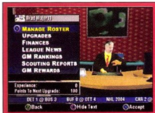

EA SPORTS
nhlpa.com

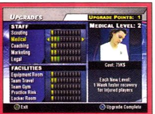

MODANO
9
EA SPORTS

BIG HITS!

Power up and flick the stick

If there's anything better than hammering someone with the right analog stick, it's powering up before you do it for an extrastrong blow!

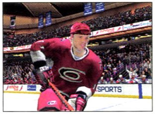

Manage Roster
Upgrades
Finances
League News
GM Rankings
Scouting Reports
GM Rewards
Experience: 0
Points To Next Upgrade: 100
DET 1 @ BOS 3
BUF 0 @ OTT 4
NHL 2004
CAR 2
Back
Hide Text
Accept

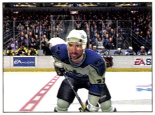

Upgrades
Upgrade Points: 1
Medical Level: 2
Staff
Scouting
Medical
Coaching
Marketing
Legal
Facilities
Equipment Room
Team Travel
Team Gym
Practice Rink
Locker Room
Cost: 75K$
Each New Level: 1 Week faster recovery for injured players
Exit
Upgrade Complete

IT'S YOUR TEAM

You are the general manager in the fantastic Franchise mode

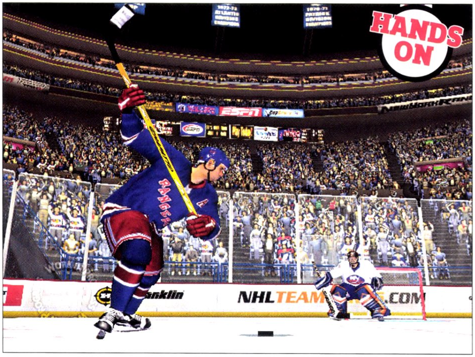
We love what EA has done to the Franchise mode in *Madden*, but from what we've seen, it looks like *NHL 2004*'s may be even deeper. As in EA's NFL title, you can manage your roster by signing free agents, trading players, managing contracts, etc. There's also an upgrade system (pictured right) that, as you gain experience, allows you to enhance such specifics as coaching (players get better with each increase) and the team's gym (adds to their strength attribute). And among several other little things, you can earn decorations like the god-awful wallpaper you see above.





86° The average temperature in Miami on September 19, when the Panthers' preseason *ice* hockey season begins.

10/10/03 Beginning date of the next Rugby World Cup, held in Australia. Get psyched!



ESPN NHL HOCKEY

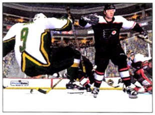
The total sports network meets hockey

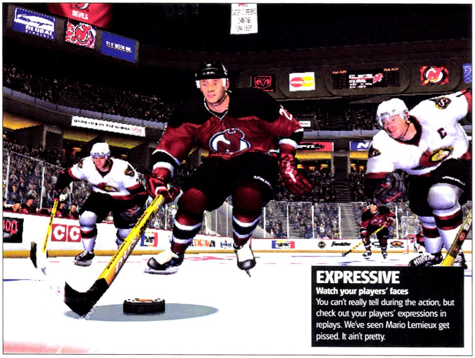
Just as we saw this month with *ESPN NFL Football* (see page 98), Sega has taken full advantage of its last year of development to incorporate the sports network's signature style into each of its new games. *ESPN NHL Hockey* even one-ups *NFL* by featuring play-by-play (from what we've heard, really *great* play-by-play) from actual ESPN announcers Gary Thorne and Bill Clement, not generic voice actors.

As far as gameplay is concerned, what more can you ask for? *NHL 2K3* absolutely amazed us, and the game formerly known as *NHL 2K4* only improves upon its predecessor with new animations (we love the diving shot) and a few subtle graphic enhancements.

You can also try your hand at skills competitions like those seen on All-Star Saturday, and playing 2-on-2 on the *Hitz*-like Mini-Rink is a blast. And oh yeah...did we mention you can finally play online?

Publisher: Sega **Developer:** Visual Concepts/Kush Games **Release Date:** September

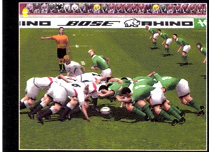




EXPRESSIVE

Watch your players' faces

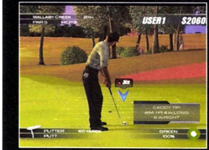
You can't really tell during the action, but check out your players' expressions in replays. We've seen Mario Lemieux get pissed. It ain't pretty.



RUGBY 2004

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: HB Studios
Release Date: September

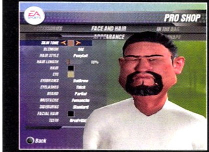
Most Americans know nothing about rugby—that's probably why the United States sucks so much in this game. And who knew Samoa was so freakin' good?!



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Release Date: Fall

One of the coolest things about *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004* is the ability to create a golfer from scratch. Using a robust character-creation tool, you can make a golfer who looks like...well, pretty much anyone. We're also dying to get into some real-time online play for the first time in a golf game. Other additions include new golfers, lots of new courses, and a few new Arcade modes.



NBA SHOOTOUT 2004

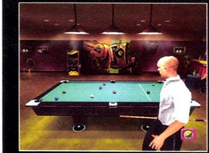
Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: 989 Sports
Release Date: Late September

989's newest hoops title includes all 50 of the NBA's greatest all-time players together in one game for the first time, plus a greatly improved Career mode.

NCAA GAMEBREAKER 2004

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: 989/RedZone
Release Date: August

With online play, this *could* be the year that *GameBreaker* bursts back into the minds of college football gamers. (But it's probably not.)

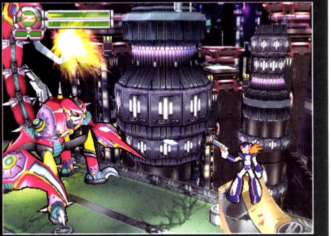


WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL

Publisher: Jaleco
Developer: Blade
Release Date: June

It's about time someone made a pool game with real-life pool pros. There's plenty of stuff in this game for casual players, too.

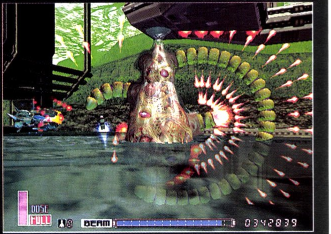
NOT YOUR TYPICAL CAPCOM VOICES
Kris Zimmerman, the voice director for *Metal Gear Solid 2*, lended her voice-recording talents to *Robin Hood.*

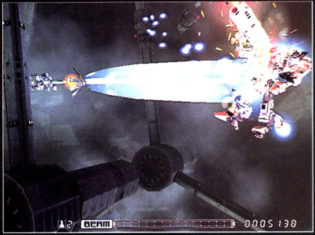


MEGA MAN X7

Wanna know the weird thing about *Mega Man X7*? Of the game's three characters, our 15-year-old blue-armored pal is used the least. Don't get too disappointed, though—Zero and Axl (no relation to Rose) kick their fair share of ass through both 2D and 3D environments (the latter a *Mega Man X* first). Series newcomer Axl has the sweet ability to adapt the attack methods of his enemies and use them for himself.

Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **Release Date:** October





R-TYPE FINAL

Now that Eidos' Fresh Games label has picked up Irem's fine-looking *R-Type Final*, we didn't hesitate to check out the Japanese version. *Final* displays everything in glorious 3D, while maintaining perfect 2D gameplay (similar to *Einhander*). The most shocking part, though, is the number of ships available (51!) and the number of weapons each can carry. This could be the most in-depth shooter ever.

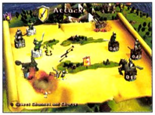
Publisher: Fresh Games **Developer:** Irem **Release Date:** Fall

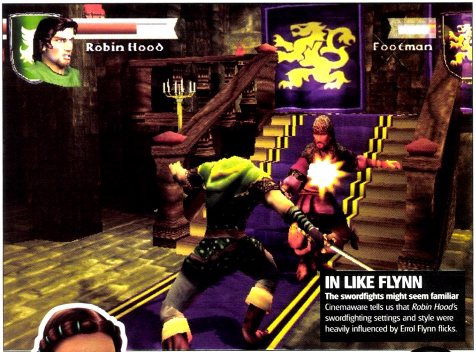
ROBIN HOOD
DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

Guard, turn, parry, thrust, spin...

It's not easy to pigeonhole *Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown* into one genre. Like the classic PC game on which it's based, *Robin Hood* mixes turn-based strategy with an array of action sequences—only more so. Where the original mixes jousting and some (very) basic swordplay with the strategic segments, this updated version adds archery raids to capitalize on the new Robin Hood focus. And you'll find a lot more action this time around; the balance between the two modes of play evens out much more nicely. Story and strategy also play a major role, of course. In your quest to reclaim England's crown, you meet and interact with many characters from British history and the Robin Hood legend, from Little John to Will Scarlett. Tallyho!

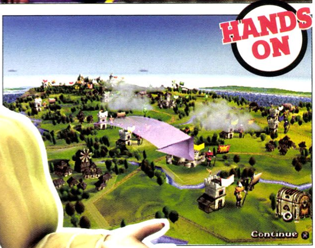
Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Cinemaware **Release Date:** August

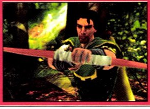




IN LIKE FLYNN

The swordfights might seem familiar
Cinemaware tells us that *Robin Hood's* swordfighting settings and style were heavily influenced by Errol Flynn flicks.



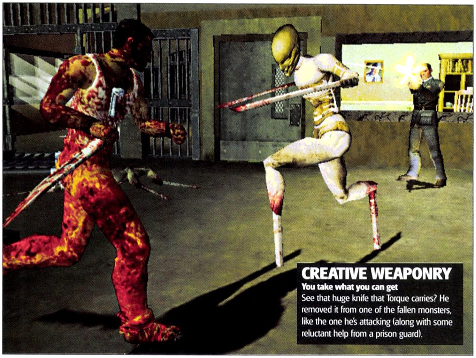


DRAW!

Steal from the rich, give to the poor
One of the new action sequences in *Robin Hood* involves attacking gold-laden convoys from high in the trees. You have to pick your targets wisely, though—fail to take out the wagon drivers and you'll miss the biggest haul.

www.stanwinstonstudio.com
If you haven't heard of Stan Winston Studio (designer of *The Suffering*'s monsters), go here to see why you should have.

NOT COMING SOON
At E3 last May, LucasArts announced a few new *Star Wars* games...none for PS2. Given the recent batch, maybe that's good.



CREATIVE WEAPONRY
You take what you can get
See that huge knife that Torque carries? He removed it from one of the fallen monsters, like the one he's attacking (along with some reluctant help from a prison guard).

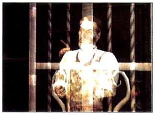
THE SUFFERING

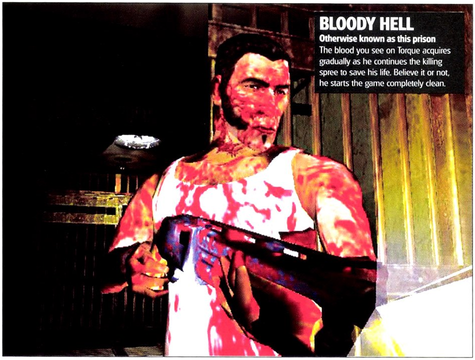
Rated M for mature...trust us

You know those videogames you see on the news, the ones that the politicians wave around while saying, "Your kids are playing this, and it's ruining them"? *The Suffering* is gonna be one of those games—big time.

Things start out simply enough when a badass convict named Torque arrives at a 1950s jail. Oh, sure, there's your typical uncensored prison chat ("Will you shut the f— up, you baby-raping, sodomizing sack of sh—?!"), but nothing you wouldn't see on fine family viewing like *Oz*. Soon enough, though, man-sized spiderlike creatures emerge and start killing everyone with their sword-shaped appendages. All hell breaks loose. As Torque, it's your job to survive. Don't let the voices in your head drive you insane as you team up with survivors—or kill them, if you want—and try to find out just what the hell is happening. Your play choices determine one of the game's three endings.

Publisher: Midway **Developer:** Surreal **Release Date:** October





BLOODY HELL
Otherwise known as this prison
The blood you see on Torque acquires gradually as he continues the killing spree to save his life. Believe it or not, he starts the game completely clean.

COMING SOON

The latest on what's coming out and when. (Just remember that no release date is ever final!)

AUGUST

Alter Echo	THQ	Fight evil in several forms
Bombastic	Capcom	Pseudosequel to *Devil Dice*!
Buffy: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	Buffy's not *totally* gone now
Chaos Legion	Capcom	Hack-n-slash meets RPG
Cabela's Deer Hunt: 2004 Season	Activision	Some good ol' huntin'
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	Helicopters to the rescue!
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubi Soft	Based on the movie
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	One quirky RPG
Galidor: Def. of Outer Dimension	EA/Lego	Based on Legos that aren't Legos
Freaky Flyers	Midway	Airborne kart racing
Futurama	Sierra/Fox	Fry and pals shoot it up
Gladius	LucasArts	Strategic gladiating
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	Hack-n-slash RPG
Madden NFL 2004	EA Sports	Chat with competitors online!
Micro Mayhem	Jaleco	Like Micro Machines...but not
NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	Online...but worth playing?
NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	Ready for a comeback?
RPG Maker 2	Agetec	Create-a-Game
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	It'll be reel reel reel fun!
Romance/Three Kingdoms VIII	Koei	Hardcore strategy
Silent Hill 3	Konami	Heather tries to survive the town
Soul Calibur II	Namco	The best fighter ever
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	THQ	Watercraft racing
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	Adventures in the mirror universe
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	Sega	New fighters, new moves

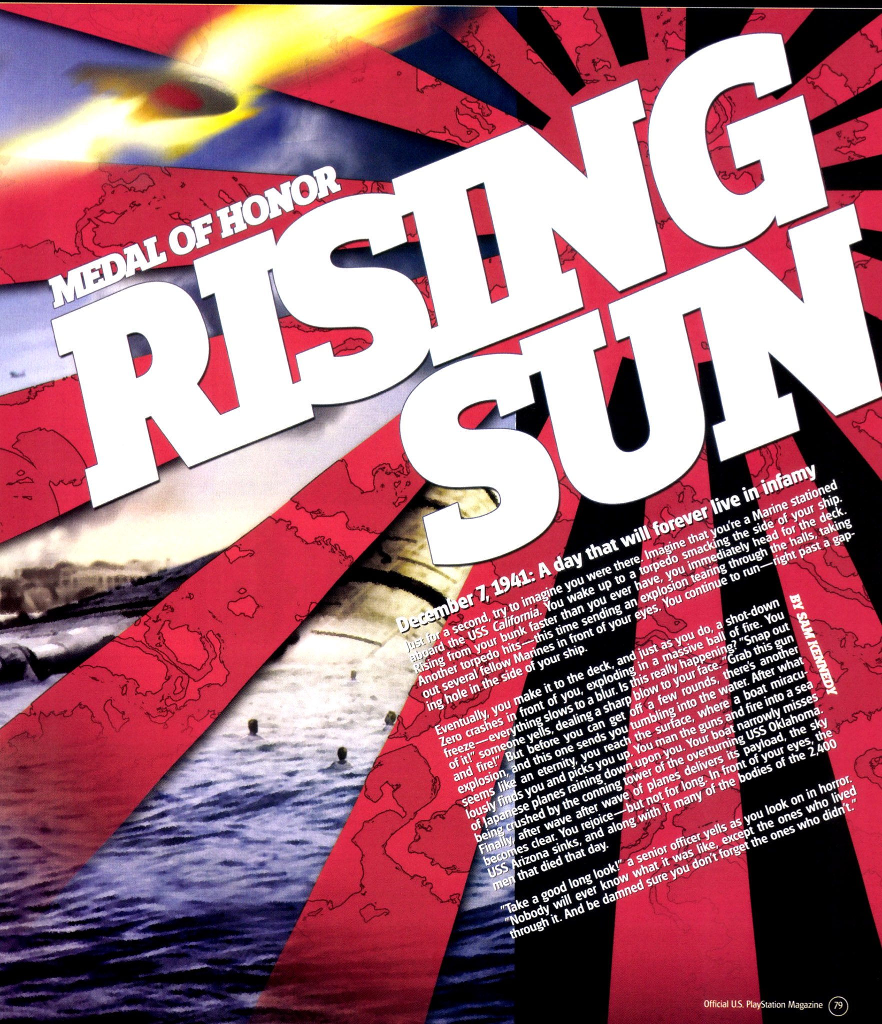
Gladius

Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII

SEPTEMBER

Bionicle: The Game	EA/Lego	Defend Mata Nui, brave Tao!
Blowout: Military Fighting Unit	Majesco	Shoot, shoot, and shoot more
Corvette	TDK	Celebrate 50 years of the Vette
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubi Soft	Play the movie
DDRMAX2: Dance Dance Rev.	Konami	Get ready!
Disney's Extreme Skate Adv.	Activision	Simba skates like Tony
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	Sequel to a great strategy game
ESPN NHL Hockey	Sega	*NHL 2K4* no more
ESPN NFL Football	Sega	Enter the helmet cam
E.T.: Return to the Green Planet	NewKidCo	The movie's unofficial sequel
Freedom Fighters	EA	Kick Soviet ass
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	Roman-themed hack-n-slash
The Hobbit	Sierra	Tolkien time!
Hot Wheels: Highway 35	THQ	Toy cars go fast
Ice Nine	BAM!	The next *Splinter Cell*?
Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion	THQ	The boy genius in action
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	Airborne warfare
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham	Beat the crap outta Carrot Top!
NASCAR Thunder 2004	EA Sports	More left turns
NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	Play as the NBA's 50 greatest
NFL Blitz Pro	Midway	It's 11-on-11 now
NHL 2004	EA Sports	Hockey with a face-lift
NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	More realism in your *Hitz*
Risk	Atari	World domination
Robin Hood: Defender of Crown	Capcom	A classic PC game reborn
Rugby 2004	EA Sports	We don't get it, but we like it
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Sierra/Fox	Grand Theft Auto: Springfield
Sphinx and the Shadow of Set	THQ	A gorgeous platformer
Starsky & Hutch	Empire	Based on that '70s show
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	Activision	NOT a *GTA* clone...we swear!!!
Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	BAM!	Claymation platformer
Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ	Futuristic first-person shooter

RISING SUN



MEDAL OF HONOR

RISING SUN

December 7, 1941: A day that will forever live in infamy

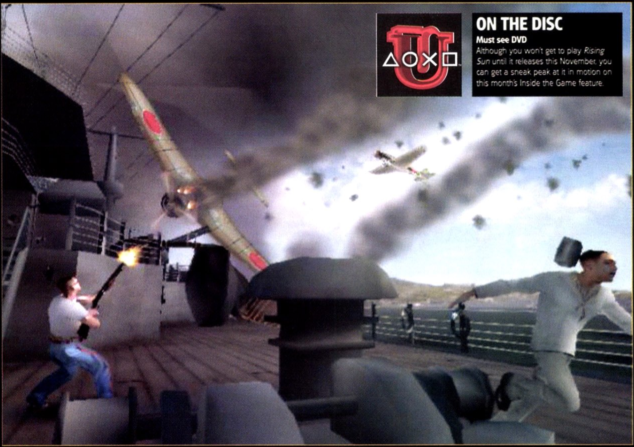
BY SAM KENNEDY

Just for a second, try to imagine you were there. Imagine that you're a Marine stationed aboard the USS *California*. You wake up to a torpedo smacking the side of your ship. Rising from your bunk faster than you ever have, you immediately head for the deck. Another torpedo hits—this time sending an explosion tearing through the halls, taking out several fellow Marines in front of your eyes. You continue to run—right past a gaping hole in the side of your ship.

Eventually, you make it to the deck, and just as you do, a shot-down Zero crashes in front of you, exploding in a massive ball of fire. You freeze—everything slows to a blur. Is this really happening? "Snap out of it!" someone yells, dealing a sharp blow to your face. "Grab this gun and fire!" But before you can get off a few rounds, there's another explosion, and this one sends you tumbling into the water. After what seems like an eternity, you reach the surface, where a boat miraculously finds you and picks you up. You man the guns and fire into a sea of Japanese planes raining down upon you. Your boat narrowly misses being crushed by the conning tower of the overturning USS Oklahoma. Finally, after wave after wave of planes delivers its payload, the sky becomes clear. You rejoice—but not for long. In front of your eyes, the USS Arizona sinks, and along with it many of the bodies of the 2,400 men that died that day.

"Take a good long look!" a senior officer yells as you look on in horror. "Nobody will ever know what it was like, except the ones who lived through it. And be damned sure you don't forget the ones who didn't."

RISING SUN



ON THE DISC

Must see DVD

Although you won't get to play *Rising Sun* until it releases this November, you can get a sneak peak at it in motion on this month's Inside the Game feature.

Battle Online!

One of the coolest new features in this *Medal of Honor* is multiplayer support (PS2 owners missed out on multiplayer in *Frontline* because we got the game a few months earlier than the other consoles did). *Rising Sun* allows two players (through split-screen) to go at it in a deathmatch mode or to play through the entire game together in a co-op mode (see the above early screenshot). Even better, the PS2 version of *Rising Sun* features online support! Eight players will be able to play deathmatch (free-for-all or team-based) and capture the flag in 10 arena-style levels that were specifically created based on the real game's levels. It even supports voice chat via the PS2's USB headset! In fact, serious players will be able to set aside a separate PS2 to act as a server. Only the PS2 version of *Rising Sun* will offer online play, so now you can rub that in your other-console-owning friends' faces.

It's about five minutes since the opening scene of *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* has come to a close, and I'm still shaken by it. Here I am, seated in the demo room of EA's Los Angeles studios, trying to convey to the development team how amazed I am by what I just witnessed...and I can't. The words simply fail me. This scene, which manages to pack more action and emotion into 15 minutes than most games do in their entirety, is single-handedly the most impressive piece of videogaming I have ever seen.

I can tell you this honestly: I believe I now have a better understanding of what it was like to be at Pearl Harbor. To imagine the horror of being on one of those ships when the first torpedoes hit is simply impossible, and yet I can't help but feel that I now have some small idea of what utter chaos it must've been. I also have a better picture of just how massive a force the Japanese led against the United States that day. I've seen plenty of films on Pearl Harbor, but none has impressed this upon me as much as when in *Rising Sun* you reach the *California*'s main deck and look to the heavens. Silhouetted against a finely painted backdrop of clouds, hundreds of planes dot the sky. It's a stunning picture, and one that will forever be ingrained in my memory.

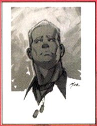
My inability to speak comes as no surprise to the EA team, though. After all, my reaction is pretty much the same as that of the thousands of gamers who witnessed this same demo at the Electronic Entertainment Expo a few months ago. The members of the team can't help but smile, and I get the feeling they're more than a little proud. They should be. With this new Pearl Harbor sequence, they've managed to outdo even the incredible D-Day scene that opens *Medal of Honor: Frontline*. If you played through it, you know this is saying a lot.

What strikes me most about this Pearl Harbor sequence is just how spectacular it is. The *Medal of Honor* developers have always prided themselves on the cinematic nature of their games, but *Rising Sun* clearly takes things to a new level. The game opens on a picturesque Waikiki beach, where a man and woman ogle each other under a brilliant sunset. Hawaiian music crackles from a radio as the camera moves back to reveal that this image is actually the top half of a calendar. The date is circled to reveal that it is December 7, 1941. The camera pulls back further to display photos of our hero, Joe Griffin, with his family, along with assorted letters and memorabilia, then further to show Joe and fellow Marines asleep in their bunks on the USS *California*. That's when the first torpedo hits. In terms of its direction, the opening is pure Hollywood.

These exceptional production values extend into the gameplay. Carefully interspersed throughout the action sequences are scripted events that give the illusion you're *playing* a real movie. After the first explosions below deck, you're engulfed by fire—a fellow Marine tosses you an extinguisher to help put it out. And when you do finally make it to the deck, that jab back into reality comes as such a shock. According to the team, *Frontline* had about 30 of these scripted events. *Rising Sun* has about 300. "One of the reasons we're able to fit in so much story is that we've doubled our design staff with this game," Lead Designer Christopher Cross explains. "*Medal of Honor* had five designers, and for *Rising Sun* we have 10—one for each level."

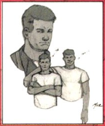
Because of this extreme attention to the story, the team deemed it necessary to storyboard the entire game—exactly what's done for movies. "Since we're trying to incorporate a more complicated story than before, it made sense to work out most of the kinks first by doing storyboards that covered the whole game," Cross explains. He then shows me a DVD

MEET THE CAST



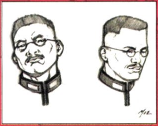
The Hero: Joe Griffin

At 26, he's the eldest son in a mining family. The game starts with him aboard the USS *California*.



The Brother: Donny Griffin

Donny makes appearances throughout the game. You'll get to see his perspective on events in *Rising Sun 2*.



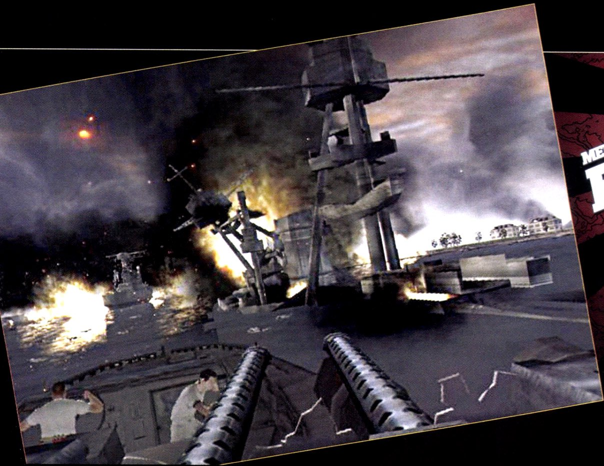
The Villain: Masataka Shima

A commander in the Japanese navy, Shima plans to stockpile gold looted by the Japanese army. He speaks both English and Japanese, having been schooled in the United States.

The *Medal of Honor* developers have always prided themselves on the cinematic nature of their games, but *Rising Sun* clearly takes things to a new level.

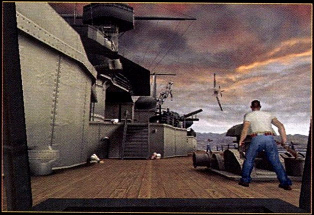
MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

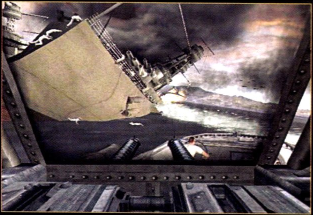
EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

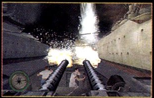


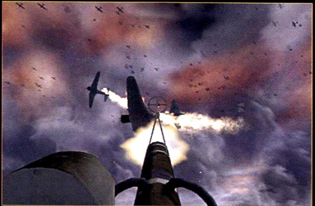
OH. MY. GOD.

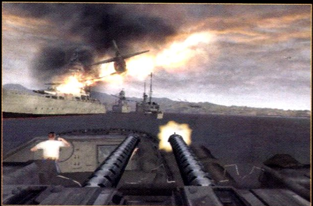
If you think these screens look good... Wait until you actually play it. The Pearl Harbor sequence has to be one of the most thrilling opening sequences in any game ever. Once you see it, you'll agree: The *Medal of Honor* team have truly outdone themselves this time.



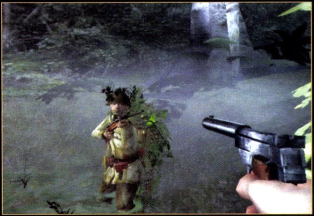


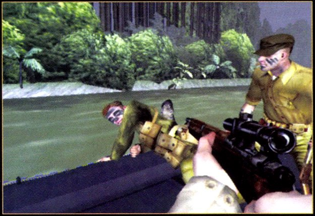






RISING SUN



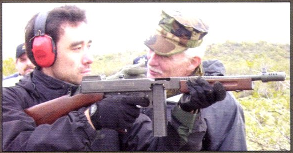


DID YOU KNOW?

The six degrees of *Medal of Honor*... Medal of Honor's theme music is used in one of the trailers for the film *Seabiscuit*? And did you know that Toby Maguire plays *OPM* Art Director Bob Conlon's great-uncle Red Pollard in that film? Well, now you know. And knowing is half the battle.

that contains the animatics (animated storyboards) created for the game. I'm shocked—the entire game is walked through, scene by scene, with sketches and animation. It even includes voice acting and a soundtrack. "It's like watching *Rising Sun: The Movie*," Cross jokes. Imagine my surprise when I first see it, though. I know they do this sort of stuff for movies, but games? Apparently, they do now.

As I journey through EA's offices to see more of the game, I recognize all sorts of examples of this team mirroring Hollywood's methodology. The art direction, for example, goes well above and beyond anything I've seen before in games. The extraordinarily talented art director Thom Ang, creator of concept art for such TV shows as *The X-Files*, informs me of his rationale behind *Rising Sun*'s visuals. "The greatest feature of art directing *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* in the Pacific theater is contrast," he says as he points to several of his paintings on the wall. "In the war-torn European theater, the palette tends towards desaturated, dark, and gritty. The old architecture is familiar to us in Western civilization. These things serve to create a foreboding backdrop to war." He then directs my attention to some of *Rising Sun*'s Asian settings. "Contrast is to be found in multiple areas in the Pacific theater. The Japanese foe comes from a very different Eastern culture. The environments are sometimes pristine jungle settings. Paradise seems a contrary landscape to wage a war; it's more inviting than foreboding. And the palette in paradise can range into rich, saturated colors." This Western versus Eastern palette becomes even more apparent when you examine the characters in the game. "For the United States, we drew on the inspiration of painters and illustrators such as Dean Cornwell, Norman Rockwell, and J.C. Leyendecker," he says, as he points out the chiseled, heroic look of the Everyman Americans. Then he moves over to the Asian characters. "Looking again at Japanese woodblock prints and screens, we wanted to apply the same flowing, elegant lines and shapes evident in those figures onto our Japanese characters." I'm amazed at how much thought has gone into the many faces. Ang even claims to take inspiration from the blocky utilitarianism of the Western alphabet and the flowing curves and organic



Aye, Captain

No *Medal of Honor* project would be complete without a training session with Captain Dale Dye. Now retired from the military, Dye is considered the preeminent military consultant to the entertainment industry and has worked on such films as *Saving Private Ryan*, *Casualties of War*, and *Platoon*. His experience in Asia came in especially handy for *Rising Sun*. "He taught us a lot about close-up tactics, squad tactics, and the differences between U.S. Marines and the Japanese soldier, both in how they fought and why," explains Design Director Christopher Cross. "We then got to apply these tactics with paintball guns out on a course that had bunkers and dense foliage. We split into teams and had to fight as both the U.S. and Japanese. This really illustrated the mindset of both sides."

WWII TIMELINE

Events are color-coded as follows:

- 🟧 MEDAL OF HONOR
- 🟥 MEDAL OF HONOR: UNDERGROUND
- 🟩 MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE
- 🟦 MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN
- ⬜ ACTUAL EVENTS

1939

September 1, 1939
German invasion of Poland

1940

September 16, 1940
U.S. begins draft

1941

February 16, 1941
10,000 Jews are
deported from Vienna

December 7, 1941
Joe awakens when a torpedo hits his
ship and then hurries to help defend
his fleet from the Japanese

December 7, 1941
Pearl Harbor

1942

January 1, 1942
Joe gets transferred to the Philippines
and is directed to blow up a bridge

May 10, 1942
Manon escapes from the Gestapo after
her brother is killed in a Nazi ambush

June 3-6, 1942
Battle of Midway

August 6 1942
Joe is part of a commando team sent
to weaken the Japanese defenses in
Guadalcanal before the invasion

August 7, 1942
U.S. Troops invade Guadalcanal

October 14, 1942
Joe and two squad mates are sent
to rescue captured demolition
experts in the mountains of Guadalcanal

November 5, 1942
Manon must sabotage Rommel's supply
line while posing as foreign correspondent

November 11, 1942
Axis forces begin the
Occupation of France

1943

February 1943
Manon must rescue British POWs from the famed
Abby before it is destroyed by the Allied air forces

February 8, 1943
U.S. troops complete the capture
of Guadalcanal from the Japanese

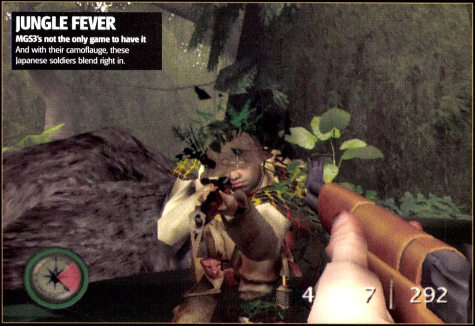
March 12, 1943
Joe travels to Singapore to infiltrate high-level meetings
between Japan and Germany

July 1943
Manon, in disguise, must destroy coastal guns
without harming the surrounding archeological dig

July 25, 1943
Benito Mussolini is removed
from power in Italy

September 1943
Manon investigates Himmler's secret headquarters
and finds more than she bargained for

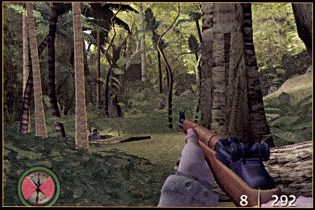
1944



JUNGLE FEVER

MGS3's not the only game to have it

And with their camoflauge, these Japanese soldiers blend right in.



A BUMPY RIDE

It's a whole new gameplay experience

One of the first things you'll notice in *Rising Sun* is its contoured level design. Whereas *Frontline* essentially had you battling on a flat plane, *Rising Sun* offers forests, hills, and caves to traverse. And its levels aren't so linear—there are multiple paths to a destination.

January 16, 1944
Dwight D. Eisenhower is named commander of the Allied forces

April 26, 1944
Joe is sent to the Burmese jungle in search of the Temple of Gold

June 6, 1944
D-Day

June 12, 1944
Jimmy must find a downed G-3 officer before the Gestapo does

June 15, 1944
Jimmy must locate and destroy Railgun Greta before it brings Allied shipping in the English Channel to a halt

June 23-28, 1944
Jimmy must scuttle submarine U-4901 in a daring raid

July 16, 1944
Joe and his squad mates discover the Bridge over the River Kwai and, with help, sabotage it to create a massive train crash

July 20, 1944
Claus von Stauffenberg attempts to assassinate Hitler

July 1944
Manon must destroy a V1 launch site with the help of an undercover operative

August 1944
Patterson stows away as U-Boat cargo to reach and destroy a fuel depot and research facility

August 19-20, 1944
Manon must prevent General von Choltitz's second-in-command from destroying Paris

September 11, 1944
Allied troops enter Germany

September 12, 1944
Jimmy must make contact with a member of the Dutch Underground before the fury of Operation Market Garden is unleashed on the region

September 17, 1944
Operation Market Garden

September 20-21, 1944
Jimmy is thrust into the middle of Market Garden as he travels to the actual "Bridge Too Far" in Arnhem

September 23, 1944
Jimmy travels clandestinely into Nazi Germany

September 24, 1944
Jimmy infiltrates the Luftwaffe's secret jet aircraft facility to steal the HO-IX prototype

October 14, 1944
Erwin Rommel commits suicide

November 25, 1944
Jimmy infiltrates and destroys Fort Schmerzen, where poison gas is being manufactured for use against Allied troops

December 16, 1944
Failed German offensive in Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge)

1945

January 30, 1945
Joe returns to the Philippines and helps rescue hundreds of POWs being kept there

February 1, 1945
Jimmy knocks the German atomic program off track by destroying its heavy water supply

February 2, 1945
Jimmy races to prevent the destruction of all the stolen artwork that the Nazis have collected during the war

February 19, 1945
American troops land at Iwo Jima

March 25, 1945
Jimmy sabotages a V2 rocket to destroy the base at Nordhausen

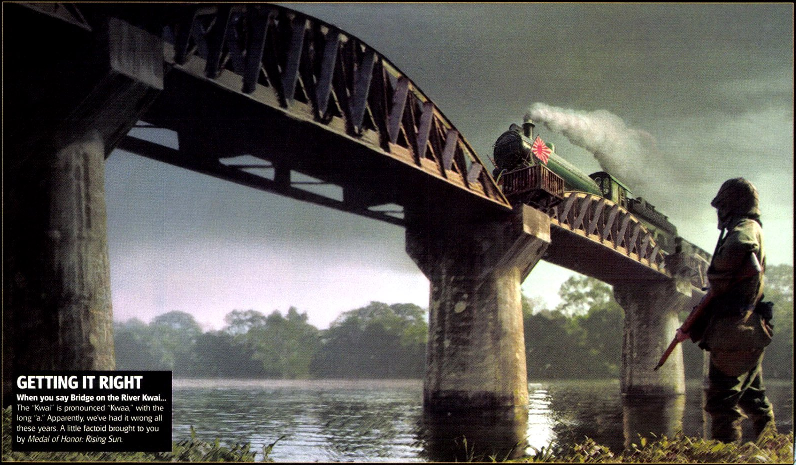
May 8, 1945
VE- Day (Victory in Europe)

August 6, 1945
Atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima, Japan

August 9, 1945
Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan

August 15, 1945
VJ-Day (Victory over Japan)

1946



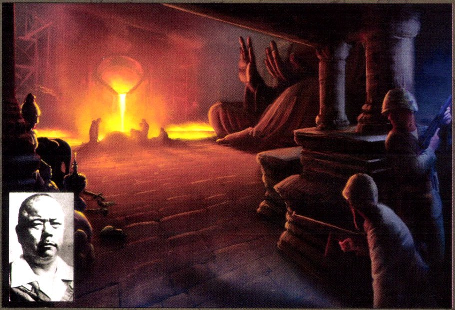
GETTING IT RIGHT

When you say Bridge on the River Kwai... The "Kwai" is pronounced "Kwaa," with the long "a." Apparently, we've had it wrong all these years. A little factoid brought to you by *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun.*

sumi brushwork of kanji. "All of these ideas were translated into two distinct visual styles. The Americans appear more angular, rugged, chiseled, with a warm, saturated palette. The Japanese have curved surfaces, flowing lines, a samurai-like silhouette, and a cool, faded, desaturated palette," he explains.

Rising Sun also marks the first time a *Medal of Honor* game is using a team dedicated solely to lighting—a team made up in large part of people with Hollywood experience. "One of the reasons I joined EA is that [the team isn't] afraid of borrowing cinematic lighting to heighten gameplay," Lighting Artist Zach Schlappi tells me. "One of my personal observations regarding many games is that they tend to overlight areas and rely heavily on a direct global illumination solution, using practical lights as their only source of light. Although this may be technically correct, it tends to be emotionally void and visually flat." He walks me through some of the Burmese jungle settings, where we see organic pools of light created by openings in the forest canopy. "I often recall the Disney technique of forcing the eye to the center of an image by framing it with silhouettes. Typically, along a player's path or an open area, we take every opportunity to create distinct regions of lit and shaded spaces, so there is always a sense of framing a far-off area with shaded objects that are nearer to the player."

It's also surprising to see how much time and effort is being spent on building the actual environments—it's as if they're treated like sets. Environmental Artist Raj Joshi shows me a massive temple he's spent weeks building. In the game, it's where Yamashita supposedly melted looted gold bars. What's amazing to me is that Raj actually took the time to intricately build the structure, only to tear much of it down later. "I had to build the temple in the mindset of the Buddhists that were creating it as a place of worship," he explains, as he navigates his way through it on his desktop. "After that first half of the process, I then had to play the role of time, nature, and the Japanese soldiers who were all working against the original majesty and pristine nature of the structure. In real life, it is not too difficult to smash things and cause wear and tear. Unfortunately, in the computer,



In Search of Yamashita's Gold

One of the central story-line themes of *Rising Sun* concerns the fabled Yamashita's gold. (For those unaware, Tomoyuki Yamashita was a Japanese general stationed in the Philippines.) "In traditional *Medal of Honor* fashion, we wanted to have the player discover and chase an element of mystery beyond simply 'going to war,'" says Producer Tammie Williams. "When doing research on the Pacific theater, we were looking for an interesting story that was not mainstream, but known and documented well enough that we could wrap a central game plot around it. With Yamashita's gold, we found it. It's well documented that the Japanese plundered gold and treasures from the central banks, temples, and other stores of wealth from all the Asian countries they had conquered, and they were using these materials to fund some of their war effort. We put the player on a path to try to interdict the gold, thus eliminating some of the ability of the Japanese to continue to fund the war." One fascinating fact about Yamashita's gold is that there are still companies in the Philippines working to find the gold!

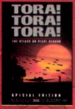
MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

THE WAR MAP

MISSION ONE

Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Hawaii

Joe is a normal, unassuming U.S. Marine, part of the shipboard detachment on the USS *California* as she lies in Pearl Harbor with the rest of the U.S. Pacific fleet. He is still peacefully asleep in his rack on that clear Sunday morning when the first Japanese torpedo hits.



Movie to watch: Tora! Tora! Tora!

MISSION TWO

The Philippines

Joe gets transferred to the garrison on the Philippines. He spends time there looking for his brother Donny. Then the Japanese invade.

MISSION THREE

Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands

The Japanese are building an airbase to strike at American convoys en route to Australia. The jungle island of Guadalcanal is a critical strategic point, so the Marines launch an assault.

MISSION FOUR

The mountains, Guadalcanal

The Japanese have entrenched major artillery pieces in the mountains surrounding Henderson airfield. Joe and two squad mates are sent to rescue a team of demolition experts who have been captured by the Japanese. Then they head into the mountains to destroy the artillery pieces.

FOX WAR CLASSICS
THE THIN RED LINE
7 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

Movie to watch: The Thin Red Line

MISSION FIVE

Singapore

Joint operations by the American OSS and its British counterpart the SOE have discovered that a top-secret and high-level meeting is set to take place in Singapore, with high-ranking Japanese and German officers both present. Joe has to infiltrate this meeting.

MISSION SIX

Singapore harbor

After some wild chases through the streets in Singapore, Joe and his team get on a speedboat and escape from Singapore's harbor.

MISSION SEVEN

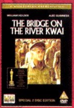
Jungle outside Bagan, Burma

The Japanese are reportedly pillaging all the occupied territory, accumulating and moving vast sums of gold into a fortified outpost. Joe is inserted into the dense Burmese jungle outside Bagan, near the legendary Temple of Gold.

MISSION EIGHT

Bridge on the River Kwai, Burma

Joe makes his way through the jungle and discovers the rail tracks that lead to the famous Bridge on the River Kwai. Finally, he finds the beginning of the bridge, and with the help of deft sabotage engineers, causes a train crash, spilling cars and fuel all along the bridge.



Movie to watch: The Bridge on the River Kwai

MISSION NINE

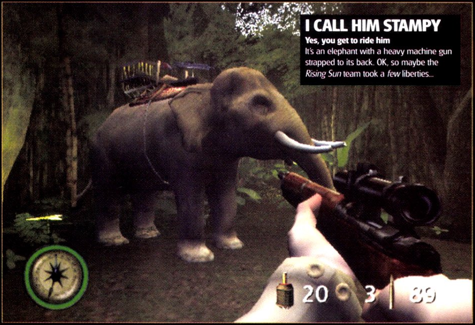
Japanese aircraft carrier, middle of Pacific Ocean

Joe hides in the back of a seaplane, lands on the deck of a Japanese aircraft carrier, and blows it up.

MISSION TEN

Cabanatuan death camp, Philippines

Japan has given the order to execute its American prisoners held in the Philippines. Joe is one of the soldiers to assault the camp and rescue the POWs.



I CALL HIM STAMPY

Yes, you get to ride him

It's an elephant with a heavy machine gun strapped to its back. OK, so maybe the *Rising Sun* team took a *few* liberties...

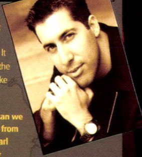
RISING SUN 2?

That's right. EA is already developing the sequel to *Rising Sun* for a release in fall of 2004. What's neat is that *Rising Sun 2* will have you playing as Donny, so you'll get to see another perspective on the events in this first game. Interestingly, *Rising Sun 2* is actually the game EA originally wanted to make—but the team figured it would hone its skills first with this *Rising Sun*. All we can say is, if this is round one, we can't even begin to imagine what they'll come up with next year.

there is no 3D hammer I can wield to break this massive structure apart. It is pretty tedious, but overall quite rewarding to make the temple feel more battered and decrepit. It makes all the difference to breathe some life—and death—into that temple and give it the character that one would expect from a long-standing relic." He's right. As he walks me through corridors in the temple, pieces of the wall have crumbled away, allowing light from the outside to shine through. The details are spectacular.

I'm then given a demonstration of the animations in the game. Listening to Lead Animator Dave Kury speak about the team's dedication to detail, you almost imagine he's choreographing people in real life. "The Japanese soldiers, while running, would hold their weapon in one hand, out to the side," he shows me, letting animations run on his screen. "The U.S. Marines would run with the weapon held by both hands. Stylistically, this was really cool for the game, since the player is presented with two different-looking silhouettes and can learn who is friendly and who is not by their running style." But the level of detail goes so much deeper than that. He explains that if you look closely, even the way in which Japanese and American soldiers dive to the ground in the game is animated differently. "Whenever a Japanese soldier would go from a run or a standing attack and go down to being prone on the ground, he would not let his weapon hit the ground first—after all, it would be insulting the honor of the emperor (since the weapon was considered a gift from him). So, the Japanese had some very awkward ways of getting to a prone position and from a prone position, getting up to a standing attack. In contrast, the U.S. Marines were trained to place their weapon on the ground in such a way as to break their fall." While he's telling me this, he's acting things out—in his office, not in the game.

Of course, one aspect that has always had its roots in film is *Medal of Honor*'s audio, headed up by Skywalker Sound alum Erik Kraber. Here, he once again pushes his team to come up with something that rivals the best from Hollywood. "We have almost four times as many sounds and more than twice the music of *Frontline*," he tells me. "Also, our music, ambience, SFX, and dialogue are now more responsive and immersive, as they more closely shadow the player's decisions during gameplay." He is enthused about the sound recording that was done for this new installment: "We had weapons from Japan, Australia, UK, and, of course, the U.S. We fired live rounds and blanks to have different sound textures to work with, and we recorded in multiple locations to get the different reverberant characteristics of different



The Music Behind MOH

The *Medal of Honor* games have always been known for their fantastic musical accompaniment—anyone who's played them will immediately attest to how important music is to their atmosphere. Although Michael Giacchino, who's composed the award-winning music for all of the games thus far, isn't returning for *Rising Sun* (he's now working on that *other* WWII franchise), EA has found someone more than able to fill his shoes. Christopher Lennertz, who has scored 17 features and has contributed to countless productions like Disney's *The Jungle Book*, seems more than up to the task. We sat down with Lennertz to discuss *Rising Sun*, his first videogame project.

Were you familiar with the *Medal of Honor* series before you came on to this project?

Yes, somewhat. I had heard a few pieces of some of the previous scores and was aware that the *MOH* people really took their music seriously. I had played *Frontline* on PS2 and was just amazed. I think the games are so well made...I'm thrilled to be involved.

We noticed you've kept some of the series' main themes for *Rising Sun*.

Yes, while I've written a new main theme for *Rising Sun*, a Japanese empire theme, and new themes for the levels, I have included a few references to the original *MOH* theme, as well as a couple of hints at some others where appropriate. Soundwise, the majority of the score is still very orchestral, but there's the addition of a lot of ethnic pieces and instrumentation this time. A large choir was also recorded in Prague to complement the orchestra.

Can you tell us a little about the way the Asian setting of *Rising* Sun has influenced your score?

We had ethnic instruments from all over the Far East, like the koto, shakuhachi, pipa, and Japanese moon guitar. We also had a recording session with four drummers blasting away on ancient taiko drums. It shook the room like crazy!

What can we expect from the Pearl Harbor sequence?

Loud, loud, loud. Actually, I'm talking about the machine guns. But as far as the music, Pearl Harbor is probably the most traditionally western, heroic style of music. The further we get towards the East, the more we widen the musical palette.

Are there any war-film soundtracks that have inspired you for this game?

Well, I love movie music, so of course I was familiar with what had been done with war scores and was thrilled to get a chance to throw my own hat in the ring. As far as favorites...I'd definitely have to say Jerry Goldsmith's *Tora! Tora! Tora!* and *Patton*.

What are the differences between scoring a game and scoring a movie?

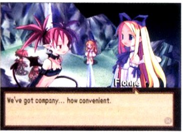
A game like *MOH* is actually very similar to a film in the dramatic needs and orchestration. The cues themselves are a little more natural, because you aren't locked into timings quite so rigidly. I've actually loved the freedom that game music allows...especially that the larger-than-life qualities of games are a lot like the classic Hollywood films. It allows me to really write the kind of music I love.

In general, what was it like working on *Rising Sun*?

This has been the greatest experience of my career. To be conducting the Hollywood Symphony Orchestra from the same podium as John Williams and Jerry Goldsmith on the Sony Pictures Scoring Stages, where they recorded classics like *E.T.* and *Ben-Hur*, was just a dream come true. I can't wait for everyone to hear it!

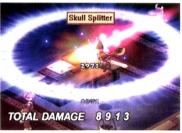
Because even the strongest heroes need help sometimes

"...strategy fans should be tenting their fingers in anticipation..."
-- GMR

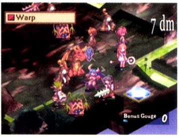


We've got company... how convenient.

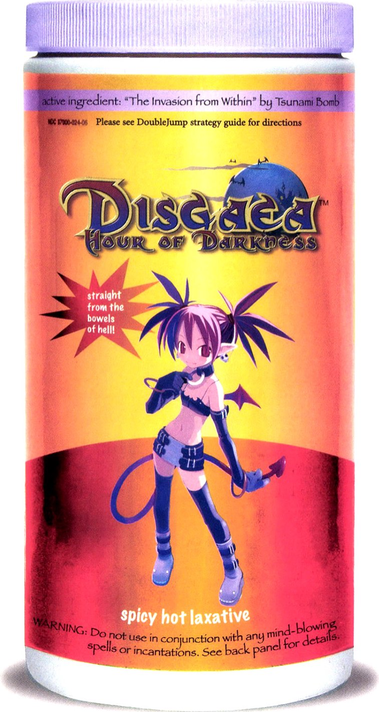
Over 40 Hours of gameplay with multiple endings!


Skull Splitter
2971
TOTAL DAMAGE 8913

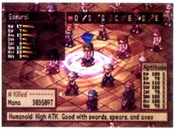
Unleash over 100 mind-blowing spells and special skills to lay waste to your enemies!


Warp
7 dm
Bonus Gauge 0

Dynamic Battle System: Switch your characters in and out of battle to match the strengths of your toughest opponents!

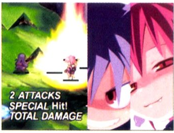

active ingredient: "The Invasion from Within" by Tsunami Bomb
Please see DoubleJump strategy guide for directions
DISGAEA
HOUR OF DARKNESS
TM
straight from the bowels of hell!
spicy hot laxative
WARNING: Do not use in conjunction with any mind-blowing spells or incantations. See back panel for details.

"Don't expect a standard strategy-RPG, though the whimsical plot, bizarre graphics, and crazy minigames combine to make Disgaea a truly offbeat experience."
--Electronic Gaming Monthly


Samurai
Aptitude
# Killed
Mana 3835897

Humanoid: High ATK. Good with swords, spears, and axes

Customize your army with over 150 character classes and monsters!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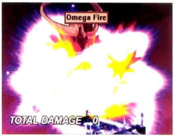
Omega Fire
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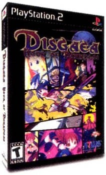
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RISING SUN

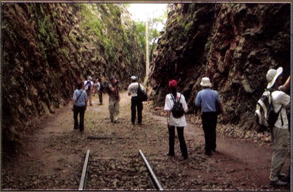
Design Director Christopher Cross on board the USS *Missouri* in Pearl Harbor, looking down the barrel of an M2 .50 caliber machine gun.

Attention to Detail

One thing the *Medal of Honor* series has always prided itself on is its attention to historical accuracy. For *Rising Sun*, team members traveled to various locations around the world to research settings for the game, including Guadalcanal, Singapore, Burma, and Pearl Harbor. One of the perks of being attached to the *Medal of Honor* project is that team members are often allowed access to areas not always open to the public, such as the USS *Missouri*, Ford Island, and Hiccum Airfield in Pearl City, Hawaii.

Of course, with all this traveling, there were certainly adventures to be had. "On one particular day in Guadalcanal, I asked our guide if he could locate two specific locations that I really hoped to find to photograph for reference," notes Environmental Lead Artist Vanessa Miles. "My first request was a river we could ride up in a small boat from the open ocean, in order to retrace to point of view our lead character would have from his raft. Unfortunately, a rain storm had just begun and we were sinking ankle deep into mud as we trekked out to the river, but we were not willing to turn back and forgo getting the invaluable of photographs and footage we were able to capture while on the boat. My second request that day took us up a muddy mountainside in a vehicle not meant for off roading on wet, steep terrain. We were stuck in deep mud several times and did not think we'd make it to the village at the top. After getting some help from the natives we were able to finally reach our destination...only to be greeted by a heard of screaming, spear-wielding natives in full war paint and grass skirts who came charging at our van. Little did we know that we were set up. The tribe was alerted of our arrival and they put on a great show for us. We spent the remainder of the afternoon with them gathering reference information, photographing their village, and enjoying the food and entertainment they provided us with."

One might ask if all this research is necessary to the game, but to the *Medal of Honor* team, it absolutely is. It's what sets their game apart from all the rest—though sometimes, it may just be to set their minds at ease. "We knew there were some large reptile creatures on Guadalcanal that actually ate soldiers at times, and we wanted to make sure we referred to them correctly in the game," says Producer Tarrnie Williams. "When doing the research, we found that they were crocodiles—but the marines at the time didn't know the difference, and they referred to them as alligators. So we've made sure to model this correctly: We've built a crocodile, and recorded dialogue that speaks of an alligator."

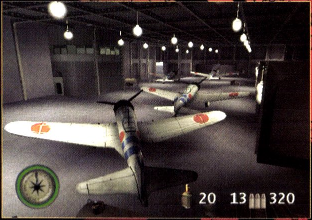


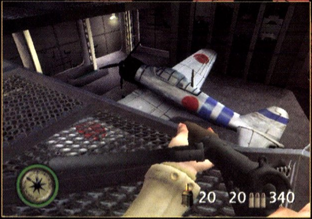
climates and landscapes." Kraber is also excited about the fact that, for the first time in a *Medal of Honor* game, he was able to have several of his voice actors performing their lines together. "The interaction between actors makes the energy of the scenes come alive," he claims. "When someone gets angry, they all feed off of it. When someone is scared, there is a heightened sense of tension in everyone's performance that makes it all feel believable." The team then proceeds to show me the Midnight Raid on Guadalcanal mission, where you take on the Japanese defenses with a squad. It's surprising how well the dialogue between your team flows.

It's not just the voices that make these scenes work, though; it's the characters. With *Rising Sun*, the team has taken lessons from Hollywood in how to create real characters—ones you'd actually give a damn about. Several of these characters make recurring appearances throughout the game, with the intention that you become connected to them. "Emotion is definitely the motivating factor in making persistent characters that follow you across the levels," Cross tells me as he boots up one sequence. "There are some events later on that will have much more impact if you've had some connection with the other main characters." What he's talking about, as he soon shows me, is that characters in the game—friends—will die. There will also be times when you'll perhaps have to risk your life to save someone—but you make that decision. You decide if it's worth risking your neck. And if the *Rising Sun* team can pull things off right, scenes like these will affect you emotionally.

It's right around then that I start to think about how far the *Medal of Honor* series has really come. What was once a first-person shooter with an emphasis on historical events has matured into this epic adventure that lets you truly experience history while it tells a story. In the back of my head, I can't help but imagine Steven Spielberg envisioning this when he came up with the franchise so many years ago. But it's that concept of being able to make your own life-and-death decisions in *Medal of Honor* that really sticks in my head. While it's clear that the *Medal of Honor* team is constantly striving to make its games more like Hollywood films, I realize that it's also now beginning to exploit its own medium. The fact that you'll come to a point in a narrative where you can choose your own outcome is something movies will never be able to offer. It makes me ponder the possibilities; the team apparently ponders them, too. "I've always said that when I can make an audience cry, in a genuine way, that's when I'll retire," Cross tells me. "The tools the industry is developing are making this ideal a possibility much sooner. Who knows, maybe I'll be retiring in five years...."

Somehow, I don't think he's that far off.





DUTY CALL

It's probably something EA would rather not have publicized, but it must be tackled. Look at the names of the people working on *Rising Sun* and you'll notice that many differ from those of *Frontline*. Why's that? Well, last year, a bunch of the *Medal of Honor* team left en masse to go start up a development studio for Activision. Here's the kicker: They're the ones doing Activision's WWII game *Call of Duty*. Things got pretty messy earlier this year when EA filed a lawsuit against those individuals claiming they'd left with internal documents and code. The 23 employees agreed to return the materials. "The reason they left was pretty obvious," says vice president of the EA L.A. studios, Rick Giolito. "That other publisher offered them a lot of cash. And when you're young and you've just launched a great product, I can see that being pretty tempting." However, Giolito doesn't feel like things'll be easy for them going forward. "They'll quickly realize that there are a lot of things that they're giving up by leaving a company like EA." Nor does he feel threatened by the new competition. "Look around you," he says. "Most of the department leads are still here, and we've hired a bunch of incredible new talent. I mean, all you need to do is look at *Rising Sun* to see how well we're doing." He's got a point.

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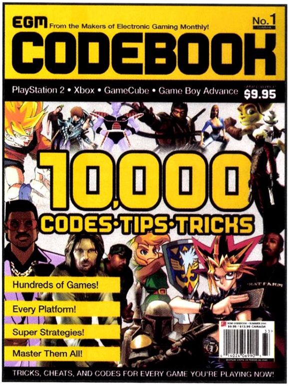
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GAME OF THE MONTH

SOUL FOOD

The soul still burns

Lots of good games this month, but there's just one that really blew us away: the incomparable *Soul Calibur II*. That's why it gets our award for Game of the Month.

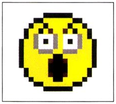
MEET THE CRITICS

JOHN DAVISON
As you read this, John's son Will may have been born. Here's his face, spooky huh?
Current Favorites: *Soul Calibur II, VF4, BG&E*
Favorite Genres: Driving, killing, hitting things

GARY STEINMAN
Gary was just too busy to review anything this month, not even *Disgaea*. But he'll probably play it for fun now.
Current Favorites: *BG&E*
Favorite Genres: RPG, Platformers

JOE RYBICKI
Joe was very, very happy to finally play a *Simpsons* game that's actually good.
Current Favorites: *Hit & Run, Splashdown 2*
Favorite Genres: FPS, Puzzle, Adventure

CHRIS BAKER
When not playing PS2 football, Scee Baik blasted womprats on Tatooine.
Current Favorites: *Madden, NCAA, Star Wars Galaxies*
Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, Sports, Strategy



SAM KENNEDY
Still speechless from *Rising Sun*'s Pearl Harbor scene, Sam now communicates only with emoticons.
Current Favorite: *Soul Calibur II, Arc the Lad: TOTS*
Favorite Genres: Action

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FIGHT!
Only one can be the best
But they're both awesome

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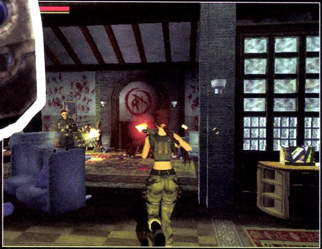
HIKE!
Madden* vs. *ESPN
Who will come out on top?



TOMB RAIDER
THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS
Another one bites the dust

Publisher: Eidos **Developer:** Core Design **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

Tomb Raider is gaming's most obvious contribution to pop culture. Lara Croft has become bigger than the thing that made her famous in the first place, and the franchise is one of the only videogames to make a successful transition to movies. You'd think, with such a valuable asset under their control, that the game's keepers would be more careful with it. *The Angel of Darkness* is disappointing at best. Given the heritage, and the burden it carries as a flag-bearer for videogaming, it's appalling.

Much is made of the new darker, moodier vibe. If you can sit through the odiously pompous musings of the development team as they ramble on, in the documentary that's featured as an "extra" on the DVD, about why *Tomb Raider* is so fabulous, you'll possibly be sold on it. Unfortunately, the execution of the actual game is nowhere near the Nine Inch Nails video treatment we're led to believe we're set for. It's more like the musings of a teenage goth with bad taste in literature. I mean, seriously...you have to be wary of anything that features Nephilim.

The biggest issue I have with it is that the controls are atrocious. In light of games like *Splinter Cell* allowing you to freely interact with your environment in such a natural way that you hardly ever have to think about the controls, *Angel*'s system becomes laughable. Lara never looks like she's comfortable in her environment. She can't even open a door without shuffling sideways and standing in exactly the right place, and some of her more rudimentary moves require you to press two buttons at once. Turning around is a major production for some reason. It's as though the system was designed by a group of people who never spoke to each other, and have possibly never before interacted with a videogame through a joypad. The upshot, aside from making you feel hellishly uncomfortable, is that you'll often fall to your death or make some kind of dumb mistake because you were struggling with the mechanics of the game rather than the challenges facing you.

The logic is all a bit wacky, too. Why, for example, can Lara charge through some locked doors but not others? Why can she move certain large objects but she can't push a mattress out of the way? Why is there only one person visible on the busy streets of Paris? And why is it a hooker? Why are some events only triggered by specific conversations, but if you reload your game and have the exact same chat, the outcome isn't the same? Why can you kill a dog by kicking it a few times, but filling it full of bullets has no effect? Why, for that matter, does Lara go around killing people even though she's avoiding a single murder charge? Why do people fall over and completely disappear even if you've only punched them a couple of times? Why is such a big deal made of new-boy Kurtis' abilities when he does so little with them? If he's such a ninja-Jedi-badass, why doesn't he act like one?

TRAINING DAY
Lara bulks up

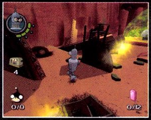
Turn to page 104 to see how the system works, but one of the "new" features in *Angel* is the ability to power-up Lara's physical attributes. This appears at first glance to be a neat nod in the general direction of RPGs—in reality, it's a bland twist on the simple collection gameplay mechanic and is actually quite linear. There are places where Lara can't perform a task because she's "not strong enough." Fortunately, what she must do to get the necessary workout that will make her stronger (like moving a block a couple of feet) is usually very close to the problematic task. Later in the game, this will help her with her newest ability: free-climbing on rock faces. The stronger she is, the longer she can hang on to stuff and dangle. At least that makes sense.

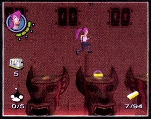
The game is full of "what the..." moments, and more often than not, they're simply because of crappy design. *Angel* is one of the sloppiest big-budget games we've seen in a long time, and given that it was three years in the making, how can this be excusable? I wouldn't mind if the game was fun or enjoyable, but it's not. It feels like it goes on for way too long, and the high points are few and far between. Ironically, given the darker and more urban vibe of the game early on, it's actually the bits where Lara is raiding tombs that really capture the imagination. Perhaps Core should remember what made Lara great originally.

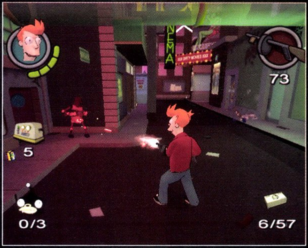
John Davison

★★

DID YOU KNOW?
According to *Futurama* creator Matt Groening, Bender the Robot is named after John Bender, the character in *The Breakfast Club.*







FUTURAMA

Just watch the show

Publisher: Vivendi Universal
Developer: UDS
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

We have seen the future as done by the 3D third-person adventure *Futurama*, and it is filled with endless platforms to leap on, strange beings with overbites, alcoholic robots, and a bounty of junk to collect. Pleasantly dystopian and imbued with a sense of whimsy, this future comes cel-shaded and jam-packed with every platforming cliché its developers could cram into it.

Futurama serves up a lost episode of the now-cancelled animated show, with the villainous Mom taking over the Earth and the beleaguered crew of the Planet Express attempting to set things right. Players take the role of the idiot manchild Fry, the one-eyed pilot Leela, Bender the foul-mouthed automaton, and the crustacean Dr. Zoidberg. Each has his/her/its own style of play and unique features: Fry goes through his levels gunning down mutants and robots, Zoidberg can plow along on a mount, Bender can perform a butt-stomp, and so on. The variation among characters is minimal, however—the videogame equivalent of using red shoelaces instead of white ones. No matter which character is being controlled the song remains the same and, though initially fun, it quickly becomes toneless.

Jumping puzzles form the meat of play, with simple puzzles, item collection, fighting, and exploration rounding out the picture. For the most part, the platforming action is remarkably forgiving, which is a godsend since players are forced to deal with a camera system that's obstinate at best. In cramped quarters, it's necessary to adjust and readjust the view, just as it's necessary to adjust and readjust it everywhere else, save for perhaps at the Pause screen.

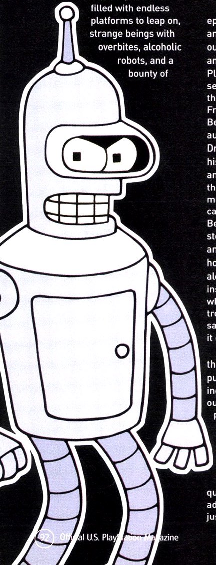
When *Futurama* stabs at creativity, it often misses. One neat scene has Fry boarding a giant chicken robot to blast away at Mom's evil robots. The perspective shifts to first person and players are expected to use lasers and missiles to decimate enemies. It's a welcome escape from hopping on [insert random platform here], but so poorly done as to be almost unworkable. Aiming here means battling with improperly tuned controls that are entirely too sensitive; one tap of the analog stick jerks the crosshairs in the direction of frustration.

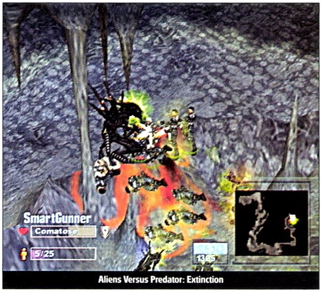
The music, much of which is remixed from the show, bravely attempts to establish a sense of urgency, but ends up as an unwelcome distraction. At one point, *Futurama* offers up a musical gem whose entire lyrics seem to be, "One, one, one! One, one, one, three!" It's exactly the sort of techno-style unmusic we imagine dictator Adolf Hitler and his squeeze Eva Braun to be making out to in the bowels of hell right this very minute.

Solid voice acting from the entire cast of the show, unlockables aplenty, and cool quips almost—but not quite—sweeten the sour medicine that is *Futurama* to the point of redemption. It's hard to hate something this genuinely funny. Unfortunately, it's not particularly easy to love it, either.

Greg Orlando

✪✪◐





Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction

ALIENS VERSUS PREDATOR: EXTINCTION

Publisher: EA Games
Developer: Zono
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen

On the surface, Aliens and Predators seem like a bit of an odd choice for a real-time strategy game. I picture these folks beating the crap out of each other (then devouring us poor humans almost as an afterthought), not carefully building bases and sending out small scouting parties.

Luckily, the developer appears to have felt the same way, because once you get into the game, you realize that even though it's an RTS, there's a whole lot more carnage than strategy.

Normally, that would bother me, but I found myself liking this somewhat unique blend of action and strategy. In part, this is because the game offers three distinctly different races (Aliens, Predators, and humans) to play as or fight against. The differences between the races are substantial enough that it almost feels like three games in one, and although each race has only seven missions, they're plenty long.

Unfortunately, they're also awfully monotonous; most levels consist primarily of trudging your way around the map until you come across an item you've been told to look for but have been given no hint as to where it is. This wouldn't be so bad if the levels weren't designed as mazes—getting from one end to the other usually involves weaving your way back and forth to avoid arbitrarily placed mountain ranges.

That's not all bad, though, because by making it so hard to uncover areas of the map, the game really ratchets up the tension. If you spend your time playing the underdog humans, working your way through a darkened map can be very tense indeed. The motion sensors that your synthetics carry emit clicks and pings straight from the *Alien* movies, increasing in pitch and frequency as the movement gets closer. It's pretty neat to find yourself in the middle of a migration of Aliens, hearing frantic pinging and seeing dots moving all around the periphery of your field of view.

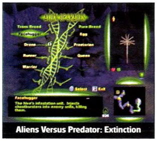
Since *Extinction* requires so little in the way of actual strategy, it probably deserves the title "RTS lite" more than *Army Men RTS* ever did. In spite of this, it brings enough new features to the table to make it worth checking out if you're into the genre. Don't expect anything too terribly deep and you won't be disappointed.

Joe Rybicki

✪✪✪◐

Battle in Progress!

Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction



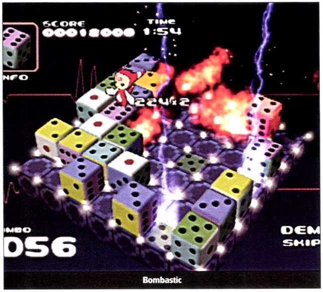
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction

THE NUMBERS GAME

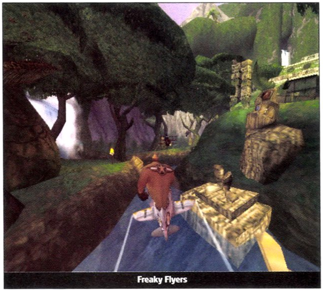
The original *Devil Dice*, in spite of earning almost universally high reviews, sold a paltry 40,000 copies.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

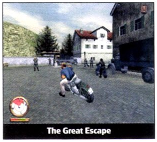
The real-life escape on which *The Great Escape* is based took place on March 24, 1944—exactly 70 years after the birth of Harry Houdini.



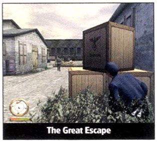
Bombastic



Freaky Flyers



The Great Escape



The Great Escape

BOMBASTIC

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Shift
MSRP: $29.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

The original *Devil Dice* is just a hair shy of being too complex for its own good. The need to line up dice so they're all showing the same number on the top comes really close to requiring one too many neurons for even a puzzle-game fan such as myself. But the game keeps the challenge just inside that crucial boundary—the boundary that divides the maddeningly addictive puzzle games from those that are just plain maddening.

Bombastic not only steps over that line, it doesn't appear to be aware that such a line exists. If you were to innocently mention rumors of the line in casual conversation, *Bombastic* would probably punch you in the face and then try to convince the cops you did it to yourself.

If adding *Bomberman*esque explosions, throwing in enemies, and giving the whole game an action vibe isn't deliberately sadistic, then I'd have to call it just plain stupid. I can't think of another puzzle game that makes *less* sense.

Look, I really like puzzle games. I beat *Builder's Block*, fer chrissakes. But about halfway through *Bombastic*'s Quest mode, I turned off the game to play *Reel Fishing III*. Let me say that again: I turned of a *puzzle* game to play a *fishing* game. *Reel Fishing*'s good, but come on.

Yes, I know I'm being harsh here. This is probably because I was so looking forward to playing a PS2 version of *Devil Dice* that I couldn't help but be disappointed by *Bombastic*. To be fair, the game does have some really sharp presentation and a truly adorable *Hello Kitty*–ish vibe. And all this ranting about the game's complexity doesn't mean it's a *bad* game—it's just, in my mind, a huge step backward from the previous game. If *Devil Dice* were a person, *Bombastic* would be that person after going through a complex surgical procedure involving a lobotomy and the attachment of several new limbs and digits in unexpected places. Perhaps there's a whole club of you out there who like your puzzle games needlessly complex. If so, you're in for a treat.

Maybe the most irritating thing is that, for all its complexity, *Bombastic* isn't the slightest bit difficult. It's not at all hard to beat; I blasted through the Quest mode in an afternoon. In the other modes (like the ludicrously busy five-player Wars mode), you can do just as well by blindly twiddling the D-pad as you would by paying attention and making your moves carefully. And that's just dumb.

Joe Rybicki

★★½

Bombastic

Bombastic

FREAKY FLYERS

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

There was a time I found games like *Mario Kart*, *Crash Team Racing*, and *Speed Punks* a total blast to play. But they were followed by a barrage of wannabes that weren't. Now comes *Freaky Flyers*, a game that offers a fresh spin on kart racing. Despite some notable faults, it singlehandedly has me enjoying the genre again.

If you ever played *Diddy Kong Racing* on N64, imagine a game full of that title's airplane races, but with environments are considerably more vast and spacious. With all sorts of things going on in the background (animals playing hockey, gladiators fighting in an arena, etc.), I often found myself not caring how I fared in a race, opting instead to check out my surroundings.

Performing certain tasks (shooting a bull to start a stampede, for example) might open a chain of turbo boosts or other helpful features, and the size of the courses allows for a variety of alternate routes (only some of which I'd actually qualify as "shortcuts"—unlike in most kart racers, available routes are usually immediately apparent). The game comes complete with fairly typical special weapons, but shooting down other freaks with unlimited bullets does add a little something new.

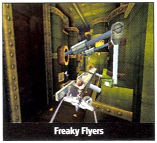
I only wish there were more of these fine courses to race through. With just eight available (plus four amusing minigames that essentially turn the game into a shooter), *Freaky* theoretically shouldn't take much time to play through. An exceptional upping of the difficulty in the latter part of the game ensures otherwise, however. Having to find the one quick route through so you can finish first can prove very frustrating—I shouldn't need to spend two hours to beat one race.

The game's humor (one of its most touted selling points) also disappoints me. Some of the dialogue may induce a few chuckles, and the characters definitely give off that "funny" vibe (if not overly stereotypical, with names like Wasabi and Island Jack), but the delivery leaves something to be desired. The cut-scenes just try too hard to make you laugh. And does the narrator really need to sound like your best friend's bad imitation of Don Pardo?

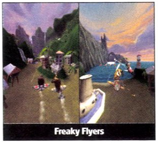
Well, maybe that's appropriate. These flyers aren't ready for prime time, but they can still thoroughly amuse you for a few hours before you return them to Blockbuster.

Chris Baker

★★★½



Freaky Flyers



Freaky Flyers

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Publisher: Gotham
Developer: SCI/Pivotal
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Reviving this classic 1963 film in videogame form is a great idea, especially with the current popularity of games like the *Medal of Honor* and *Wolfenstein* series. What's better, it's not just another first-person shooter. *The Great Escape* effectively mixes a variety of gameplay, from manning a turret in a dogfight over Europe to sneaking through POW camps Solid Snake–style to Steve McQueen's daring cross-country bike escape.

But you're not restricted to playing as ol' Steve in *Escape*. The game switches up playable characters as you work through the story and has you playing the events that lead up to each man's initial capture and some earlier escapes they make. This variety keeps the game fresh and makes you want to keep going just to see what you'll be doing next.

If there's one thing about *The Great Escape* that'll turn people off, it's the stealth bits. Sneaking about with guards patrolling the premises often ends up testing your patience. Remember, this is the 1940s, so you won't find any type of *Metal Gear Solid* radar system in place. It's up to you to scout each area and figure out where the guards are going (and looking), as well as the searchlights' patterns. You'll get discovered often, and it's really difficult to successfully avoid capture when that happens.

But that doesn't mean you shouldn't try *The Great Escape*. It's a good game, just flawed. Go out and rent it first; you may be surprised at how enjoyable it is.

Greg Sewart

★★★½

THE SOUL STILL BURNS
This past holiday season, the original *Soul Blade* (released on the PS1 in 1997) outsold its sequel, *Soul Calibur* (Dreamcast, 1999), six to one.

25
TALIM
MITSURUGI

32
TALIM
RAPHAEL

26
IVY
XIANGHUA
TAN
Newcomer

22
MITSURUGI
VOLDO

5-STAR AWARD
OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

Take a moment and think back on some of the real classics of gaming. You know, the *Super Marios*, the *Tetrises*, the *Pac-Mans*. Those games, although very different, have three similarities. First, they're immediately accessible to anyone who picks them up, regardless of the player's level of gaming familiarity. Second, they offer an essentially flawless gameplay experience. You know, where every action, every motion—everything—feels absolutely perfect. And third, they're deceptively addictive. Whoever thought controlling a fat little plumber or stacking assorted blocks would capture the imaginations of a generation?

I mention this because *Soul Calibur II* shares these traits. And if you ask me, it is a classic in its own right. Never mind that it's one of the best fighters ever made—it's one of the best *games* ever made.

It all began with its predecessor, *Soul Calibur* on Dreamcast. Considered to be the consummate fighting game, it's one of the few titles to ever receive perfect scores from such magazines as Japan's *Famitsu* and our sister publication *Electronic Gaming Monthly*. Unfortunately, because of the hardware it was on, *Soul Calibur* never reached the audience it deserved.

The simple fact that *Soul Calibur* is now on PS2 (with its massive installed user base) speaks volumes. A strict port of the previous installment would be enough to get excited over. I mean, the ability to play with the DualShock—the greatest controller ever—would make it worth the purchase. But Namco's done the near-impossible by improving what was already the perfect fighting game. It's not the evolutionary leap some would have hoped for, but every portion of the game has been enhanced in some respect.

Take, for example, the graphics. *Soul Calibur II* doesn't quite deliver the same "wow" factor that the original did four years ago. But the visuals still blow just about every other fighting game's graphics out of the water. The animation is stunning, the backdrops are gorgeous, and the effects are better than ever. The character count hasn't increased all that much either, but at 23, do you really need more? Gameplay has also changed very little—and rightfully so, if you ask me. Why mess with perfection?

As with its predecessor, *Soul Calibur II* feels so right. It's easy enough for anyone to pick up and have a blast with, yet it's also so deep that it could take you months to master the moves of your favorite characters. I think this is what really sets *SC2* apart from most other fighting games—it really does offer the best of both worlds.

Regardless of whether you played the original *Soul Calibur* to death (as I have), you'll be hooked on this game for ages. Of course, the game's at its best when you've got friends to go up against (the tournaments get pretty wild here at *OPM*), but even when you're playing solo, there's so much to do. The Weapon Master mode, in which you defeat challenges to unlock items, is an absolute blast—while it lasts. *VF4: Evolution* does have *SC2* beaten in this respect; there's a lot more to unlock and just generally do in that game. But if you're like me, this matters little. Playing *SC2* against the computer is entirely rewarding.

What else can I say? *Soul Calibur II* is brilliant. It's one of those extremely rare games that screams perfection. Fighting-game fan or not, *Soul Calibur II* demands a place in your gaming collection. Sorry Sega, but Namco has reclaimed its crown.

Sam Kennedy

☆☆☆☆☆

SOUL CALIBUR II

An instant classic

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
GAME OF THE MONTH

Publisher: Namco **Developer:** Namco **MSRP:** $49.95 **ESRB:** Teen

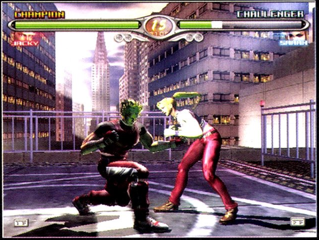
AM2, the Sega studio responsible for the *Virtua Fighter* series, created dozens of other classics, from *Out Run* and *Space Harrier* to *Shenmue*.

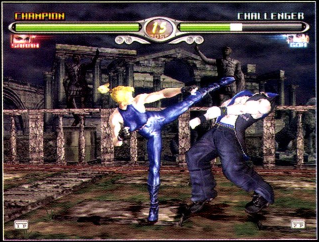
VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION

An improvement on "the best fighting game ever made"

Publisher: Sega **Developer:** Sega AM2 **MSRP:** $19.99 **ESRB:** Teen

We were pretty bold in our praise of *Virtua Fighter 4* last year, even going so far as to proclaim it the "best fighting game ever made" on our April 2002 cover. *Soul Calibur II*, sitting pretty over there on the other page, is the only game to really challenge that claim, and this month, we've had a hard time comparing the two. To make things that much more complicated, Sega has gone and done the unimaginable and has achieved two fairly incredible things. 1) It has improved upon the original *VF4* by tweaking the graphics, adding two new characters (Goh the Judoka and Brad the Muay Thai kickboxer), going nuts with a new Quest mode that offers zillions of unlockables (there are now 1,500 things to unlock), and throwing in some insane A.I. fighters modeled on Tokyo's best *VF4* players. 2) It's releasing this version as the Greatest Hit release of *VF4*, meaning you get all this for half the price of the original game.





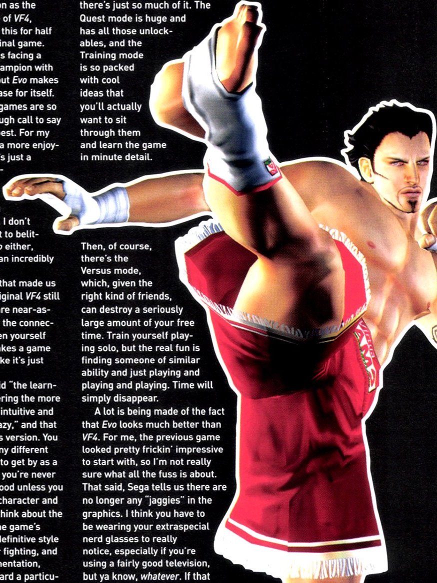
Soul Calibur II was facing a strong defending champion with the original game, but *Evo* makes a very compelling case for itself.

Ultimately, both games are so damn good, it's a tough call to say which really is the best. For my taste, I think *SC2* is a more enjoyable game, but that's just a reflection of my personal feelings on the issue. If you're really hardcore, you may feel differently. I don't want that statement to belittle the quality of *Evo* either, because it really is an incredibly impressive game.

All of the things that made us go gaga over the original *VF4* still stand. Its controls are near-as-damnit perfect, and the connection you feel between yourself and your fighter makes a game like *Tekken 4* look like it's just fooling around.

Last year, we said "the learning curve of discovering the more elaborate moves is intuitive and certainly not too crazy," and that still stands with this version. You can play *Evo* on many different levels; it's possible to get by as a button masher, but you're never going to be really good unless you study your chosen character and take some time to think about the way you fight. All the game's characters have a definitive style and rhythm to their fighting, and after some experimentation, you'll gravitate toward a particular character because he or she feels just right. The two new characters expand on this potential, but I still dig the returning characters, even a year later. What's interesting, though, is that if you were a big fan of the previous release, your favorite fighters now have an expanded array of moves that cover attacks, counters, and defensive moves.

One of the most impressive things about the game is that there's just so much of it. The Quest mode is huge and has all those unlockables, and the Training mode is so packed with cool ideas that you'll actually want to sit through them and learn the game in minute detail.



Then, of course, there's the Versus mode, which, given the right kind of friends, can destroy a seriously large amount of your free time. Train yourself playing solo, but the real fun is finding someone of similar ability and just playing and playing and playing. Time will simply disappear.

A lot is being made of the fact that *Evo* looks much better than *VF4*. For me, the previous game looked pretty frickin' impressive to start with, so I'm not really sure what all the fuss is about. That said, Sega tells us there are no longer any "jaggies" in the graphics. I think you have to be wearing your extraspecial nerd glasses to really notice, especially if you're using a fairly good television, but ya know, *whatever*. If that kind of thing is important to you...you can sleep easy knowing that this is slightly better-looking than the $40 game.

John Davison

★★★★★

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